

SACRED DRAMAS,

WRITTEN IN FRENCH,

K Bralart de Sillery P. F.

BY

MADAME LA COMTESSE DE GENLIS.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH,

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

D U B L I N:

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REPRODUCED FROM

WRITTEN IN

THE



THE

THE

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

FROM

MADAME DE GENLIS,

TO

HER DAUGHTERS.

MOST of the theatrical pieces I have composed have been for you; for the amusement and instruction of your childhood. Should it be thought I have given a happy picture of tender mothers, and of children worthy to be beloved, to you I owe the truth of those traits I have drawn, and those sensations I have expressed. You were the objects of my labors, and you are become the reward. I have not talents sufficient to inspire, or to justify, the love of fame, and to you only am I indebted for the degree of success I have experienced.

INSTITUTIONAL DEDICATORY

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

CERTAIN liberties have been taken, in the translation of these dramas, of which I, in some measure, feel myself bound to render an account; as well to the public as to the author, both of whom I hold in great respect.

The tales and incidents on which they are founded are all scriptural. In England, the reading of the scriptures is so universal that there is no person to whom the style or diction peculiar to the Bible is not familiar, through which style the happy genius of the English translators has infused a noble simplicity.

In France, on the contrary, the scriptures are so little known that the most popular stories they contain, when related to the bulk of the people, have all the force of novelty. I was present when a French lady, of tolerable education and considerable wit, and who had been near thirty years the companion of a man of letters, being accidentally questioned concerning Cain, did not know the name: and, when written, and shewn to her, and the story of his murdering Abel brought to recollection, could but just remember she had heard something concerning such a story. This is not related as an anecdote, but a fact: and, though it will by no means prove French people of education universally ignorant of the scriptures, it

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implies a great majority thus ignorant; which cannot astonish any person, who calls to mind that the use of the Bible, in the mother country, is prohibited by the catholic religion.

Madame de Genlis, therefore, very properly, instead of affecting that ancient and peculiar style which we revere, and which we expect, in whatever relates to scriptural history, has rather endeavored to express the feelings of her characters in language congenial to the taste of her country: not, however, without occasionally and happily falling into the idiom of the original.

There is yet another dissimilarity. The English language is as much more figurative than the French as is, perhaps, the Hebrew than the English.

These causes, combined, made it absolutely requisite the translation should often assume a majesty and a tone very distinct from the original; which, else, would have been pitifully degraded. Translation, though a task most irksome, to a mind desirous of fame, should, when undertaken, be executed, though not with temerity, with a self-confiding fortitude.

In the third scene of the Widow of Sarepta, the Widow is brought to determine on giving her last morsel to Elijah, on which the existence of her son depends, by recollecting that she can go to the city, sell the thread she has spun, and buy more food. But this city has just before been described

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE. vii

described so destitute of food that the rich man and the poor alike are perishing. This was an oversight which I have corrected, by adverting to the scripture narrative. Other similar freedoms I have used, but with an abstemious and respectful hand; and only when difference of manners, or difference in judgment, made them supposed indispensable.

Certain of having intended to do justice to the author, and give satisfaction and pleasure to the public, I commit my part, in this work, to the world, without anxiety. Fame it cannot acquire me; and my reputation I do not think it will injure.

The intrinsic merit of the pieces the reader will judge of: only suffer me to say, *The Death of Adam*, if my opinion be not erroneous, contains a sublimity, a pathos, and a terror, seldom equalled and seldom hoped.

London, March, 1786.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Sacred Drama of the Death of Adam, written in German, by M. Klopstock, is, as well as mine, in prose, and in three acts. It was not designed for the theatre by the author, nor was it ever performed; but it has been translated into all languages, which is the most unequivocal and satisfactory success. The author, who can please the people of all countries, may hope to please the people of all ages.

That there are defects in the Drama of M. Klopstock cannot be denied; especially in the plan. The author has infringed all the rules without necessity; without deriving a sole interesting situation, or even a single novelty by the infringement. His incidents are without motives, and he is wholly ignorant of the art of preparing and developing them. Neither has he sufficiently considered his subject; a multitude of new ideas, which naturally rise from it, are by him omitted. But his work abounds in sublime thoughts; its style is energetic, yet natural; it is full of sensations most forcibly expressed, and contains scenes most admirably beautiful.

A man of genius only could have made choice of this subject, or could have felt the original and theatrical beauties it includes. To behold the father of the human race, the first man, formed by God himself, and created for immortality, which he lost but

by his own want of obedience ; to contemplate this man in the agonies of death is, certainly, the most striking, the most pathetic, of all pictures. Surely this is the most original of all subjects ; the ideas it incites belong to itself alone, cannot be adapted to any, are proper to no other possible situation, nor does there exist a single subject, hitherto treated, which bears the same particular mark of originality.

My piece is only an imitation of the Drama of M. Klopstock. I have endeavored to avoid the defects I found, have changed the conduct of the piece, omitted many things I thought tedious, and have added a number of incidents, and several entire scenes. The sublime and the beautiful of M. Klopstock I have preserved ; nor can it be doubted but what I have preserved is superior to what I have added.

C O N T E N T S.

The Death of Adam.

Hagar in the Wilderuess.

The Sacrifice of Isaac.

Joseph made known to his Brethren.

Ruth and Naomi.

The Widow of Sarepta.

The Return of Tobias.

THE
DEATH
OF
ADAM,

A SACRED DRAMA,
IN THREE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

A D A M.

C A I N.

S E T H.

S U N I M, Grandson of A D A M.

E L I E L, a younger Grandson of A D A M.

E V E.

S E L I M A, Grand-daughter of A D A M.

T H I R S A, younger Sister of S E L I M A.

The A N G E L of D E A T H.

The Scene is a Landscape, on one side of which is a rock, and behind the rock a distant forest. On the other side is the cabin of Adam; and, in the middle, in perspective, the tomb of Abel, near which is an altar where Adam usually offered up his prayers.

SACRED DRAMAS.

THE DEATH OF ADAM.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

SELIMA *and* THIRSA.

SELIMA.

HOW beautiful the morn ! how pure the air !—Of all the days I have hitherto beheld, how much is this the brightest !—Sunim, the tender, the virtuous Sunim, has chosen Selima.—Yes, my sister, this happy day I am to become a bride ! The bride of Sunim !—Here let us repose, while Eve and the first mothers of this infant earth delight to ornament the nuptial bower—Adam will presently come forth.—Oh ! with what joy shall I fly into his arms ! this morn, my Thirsa, I know thou wilt permit me to give him the first kiss, to tell him how happy I am.—He will call me his Selima, and the tears of affection will start into his eye.—Then will I press his paternal hand to my beating heart : that hand that shall conduct me to the sacred bower, where I am to receive Sunim's vows.—
Can't

Can'st thou, Thirsa, conceive my bliss.—
 Ah ! should pitying heaven restore our
 young brother ; should Sunim find Eliel,
 and bring the beloved child once again to
 our common father, nothing would be want-
 ing to our felicity.

T H I R S A.

Poor dear Eliel ! where can he be !—
 Doth Sunim still seek him, say'st thou.

S E L I M A.

Yes ; ere wakeful Aurora left her
 couch, Seth and Sunim sprang from their
 mossy beds.

T H I R S A.

Should they return with Eliel, what joy
 for us, and for our father.

S E L I M A.

O yes, with what satisfaction, what af-
 fection, what transport doth Adam stand
 and behold the child : how often does he
 tell us, Eliel has every trait of the unfor-
 tunate Abel.

T H I R S A.

Abel !—I never hear the name pro-
 nounced without feeling something unac-
 countable and strange. I knew not Abel,
 I only have been told he *was* one of the
 children

children of our father—and that he *is* no more. How dreadful the idea! Since the creation, Abel is the only man who hath disappeared from the face of the earth.

SELIMA.

Alas! Adam, perhaps, hath lost other children.

THIRSA.

None of our brethren, at least, since our existence, have perished.

SELIMA.

I believe that man is formed for long life, and preserves his strength even in age.—The only old man on earth affords us an example; is not our Father Adam as vigorous and robust as our brethren?

THIRSA.

And how beauteous is our mother too.

SELIMA.

Aye, still beauteous—But Adam and Eve have been formed by the hand of God himself, his own workmanship; they are necessarily therefore more beauteous, more strong, more perfect than the rest of the human race.

THIRSA.

THE DEATH

T H I R S A.

Happy are we that they are ; they will live the longer.

S E L I M A.

Ah ! may they survive us all.

T H I R S A.

How majestic, how noble, how affecting the person of our father ! How venerable do the white locks flow that adorn his head.

S E L I M A.

It is the work of ages.

T H I R S A.

Yes ; for we behold no other man with the like.——But will the auburn hair of Eliel, my sister, become thus white.

S E L I M A.

No doubt, should indulgent heaven prolong his life.

T H I R S A.

Wherefore dost thou sigh ?—Hast thou any melancholy foreboding ?—Eliel, doubtless, wandered into the woods, but ought we to fear for his life ?

S E L I M A.

SELIMA.

Two days hath he been missing. I dread every thing, I know not what.

THIRSA.

Thou terrifiest me, freezest my blood !
—But, my sister, Eliel, as well as I, is only thirteen. Thinkest thou it possible to die so young ?

SELIMA.

What ! knowest thou not youth hath no power over death ?

THIRSA.

I have been told so, but we have no examples—Neither can I conceive what is meant by death.

SELIMA.

Alas, turn thine eyes ; behold where that cluster of cypress trees bend their mournful shade—there our brother Abel lies.

THIRSA.

Prithee do not mention Abel—never speak of him again.

SELIMA.

Thou weepest, my Thirsa.

THIRSA.

THIRSA.

Oh Selima—tell me Eliel will not die.

SELIMA.

Heaven will restore him—at least so I hope. But hark ! Heard I not the voice of Sunim ?

THIRSA.

Yes, 'tis he.—Alas, he returns alone !
Oh ! unfortunate Eliel.

S C E N E II.

SELIMA, THIRSA, SUNIM.

SELIMA.

Sunim !—hast thou——

SUNIM.

No, I have not found, but I have heard of him. Josiah, one of our brethren, saw him this morning at day break.

THIRSA.

And was he well ?

SUNIM.

He was beyond the torrent, beside the Forest of Cedars, chasing the roebuck.

SELIMA.

SELIMA.

Imprudent boy ! And could not Jofiah overtake him ?

SUNIM.

They were feperated by the torrent. Eliel directed his courfe towards the foreft, regardless of the shouting of Jofiah, who prefently loft fight of him ; but we know that he exifts, and that Jacim, Emin, and others, are gone to feek him in their turn ; they have taken different routs, and fince he was this morning feen fo near, he cannot be at any great diftance from our hamlet ; therefore our brethren will certainly return with him before the clofe of day.

THIRSA.

O yes, I am fure they will find him.—Kifs me, my brother.—How thou haft comforted us, dear Sunim.—Adam hath not yet left his cabin ; let us tap gently at his door, let us tell him this good news.

SUNIM.

What doft thou mean ? Adam is not in his cabin, he left it before day break ; he is walking in the fields, and Seth is gone to find and inform him of what we know.

SELIMA.

SELIMA.

And has our mother been also told the good tidings?

SUNIM,

I have just left her; she wept while she listened to me, and exclaimed, "My happiness is now complete, and this shall be the most joyful of the days of my life."

SELIMA.

Did'st thou not think 'twas Selima thou heard'st? Eve but expressed what I feel.

SUNIM.

Dear Selima, imagine then by thy own, what my sensations are! What they were when I beheld the nuptial bower!—Eve and our mothers still are there, still twining garlands and coronets of flowers, bedecking the scene of raptures.—With what emotion, what transport, I viewed these preparations! With what divine enthusiasm did I prostrate myself before the altar! Never, no never, did I pray with such fervor, such holy ecstasy! How many thanks did I render the omnipotent in that sanctified place, where a few hours hence I am for ever to be united to my Selima!

THIRSA.

THIRSA.

Eliel, my brother, shall bear the nuptial torch, and I the crown of roses, for my Selima. We will lead the way to the bower, and I will place myself beside Eliel.—Some one approaches—our father perhaps.

SELIMA.

Seth I see, but not Adam.

S C E N E III.

SELIMA, THIRSA, SUNIM, SETH.

SETH. (*Afide, as he enters at a distance.*)

Selima and Thirsa here—I must conceal my fears.

SUNIM.

Hast thou found Adam, Seth?

SETH.

Yes, seated at the entrance of the forest.

SELIMA.

What said he when thou hadst told thy happy tidings.

SETH.

SETH.

Thou knowest his affection for Eliel.

SELIMA.

O yes, and can imagine the excess of his joy! Where is he at present?

SETH.

He returns towards his cabin.

THIRSA.

Let us run, my sister, to yonder meadow, gather violets, and strew on the sod-seat on which our father reposes, when he returns from the fields.

SETH.

Ay, go my sisters, I will call you should my father return first.

SELIMA.

Wilt thou? Come then Thirsa.

(Exeunt Selima and Thirsa running.)

SCENE IV.

SETH, SUNIM.

SETH.

Stay, Sunim—I would speak to thee.

SUNIM.

S U N I M.

What sayest thou ?

S E T H.

I am restless, Sunim, uneasy.

S U N I M.

Uneasy, wherefore.

S E T H.

Oh ! Sunim.—Adam, our father—

S U N I M.

What of Adam—tell me ?

S E T H.

Judge if there be no reason for my fears. I found my father seated at the foot of a tree ; no sooner did I perceive him, than I cried aloud, we hoped to bring him Eliel this very day. I cried, and yet my father heard not ! The name of Eliel vainly resounded thro' the air ; Adam remained motionless, plunged in a deep and melancholy revery. I approached, and heavily raising his head, he shivered at beholding me ; a fearful paleness overspread and disfigured his face. I looked, and terror inexpressible seized me ! Trembling I questioned him, and with broken sentences he only could endeavour to reply.

B

I spoke

I spoke of Eliel, he sighed and the tears swam in his eyes ; at last he told me he should return to his cabin, commanded me to leave him, and come and wait for him here.

S U N I M.

What secret inquietude thus can agitate his mind ?

S E T H.

Alas, I know not ; but, without knowing, my heart already participates his griefs.

S U N I M.

Fear not, my brother, Adam is the best of fathers ; his melancholy this evening will give place to joy, when he conducts his children to the nuptial bower, and again beholds our young brother Eliel.

S E T H.

Selima and Thirsa hither return, joyous and bounding ; change we our discourse, let us not affect their hearts with fear.

SCENE

S C E N E V.

SETH, SUNIM, SELIMA, THIRSA.
(The two latter bearing a basket of flowers.)

THIRSA.

Behold, my brothers, how abundant and how beauteous the flowers we have plucked.

SELIMA.

Here are two sprigs from the jessamine which Sunim planted for me.

THIRSA.

And here are buds from the rose-tree which Eliel gave me: one of them I will keep: *(Putting a sprig aside)* the rest are all for our father.

SELIMA.

Come, Thirsa, let us spread the flowers on this grassy seat. Help us, Sunim; hold thou the basket. *(They approach a sod-seat near the cabin of Adam.)*

SUNIM.

I heard the sound of feet.

B 2

SETH.

S E T H.

It is my father.

S E L I M A.

Ah! run we to meet him. (*Selima and Thirsa precipitately empty the basket and run to meet Adam.*)

S C E N E VI.

SETH, SUNIM, SELIMA, THIRSA,
ADAM.

(*The children all surround their father.*)

SELIMA, (*Running into his arms.*)

My father! What a day for thee, for Selima, and for all thy children—we have news of Eliel.—Ere from behind the mountain Aurora rose, we were at the door of our father, waiting when he should awake; and he already had gone forth into the fields: perhaps to seek his Selima.

A D A M.

Oh! my child!

S E L I M A.

My father! the tenderest, best of fathers! Yes, I read thy heart, and all the
sweet

sweet emotions of affection.—Lo ye !
Sunim, how his hand trembles in mine ;
behold his eyes brimful of tears.—Ah !
Sunim, tell my father that our love for
each other shall be like unto his love for us.

S U N I M.

I cannot tell it so intimately as he feels.

S E T H.

My father !—Come, be seated.

S E L I M A.

Heavens ! he turns pale—scarcely can
stand.

A D A M, (*To Selima.*)

Ah !—didst thou know what I feel !

S E L I M A.

Father of mercies !—Seth help !—Su-
nim lend him thy arm.

S E T H, (*To Adam.*)

Lean on me.

S U N I M.

And on me likewise.

SELIMA.

Alas ! his knees bend ! His footsteps stagger.

THIRSA.

Lead him to the green bank.

SELIMA.

Are you in pain, my father ?——Tell me, Seth, is he ill ?——Nay answer me, my father.

ADAM, (*Seating himself.*)

Be calm, my Selima—be calm—I—I am better.

THIRSA.

His colour returns.

SELIMA.

What terror have I felt !

ADAM.

I am fatigued—want repose——Go, my children—go—to your mother.

SETH.

And leave you here alone ?

ADAM.

ADAM.

Thou may'st remain.

SELIMA.

Suffer us presently to return.

ADAM.

Yes—yes, my child—your brother shall come for you.

SUNIM.

Let us not disturb him, Selima; a little sleep will restore tir'd nature.

THIRSA.

But when Eliel returns, may we not wake you, my father.

ADAM.

Go, my daughter—go—follow Sunim.

SELIMA, (*Mournfully.*)

Come, my sister.—Farewell, my father. I will go; but this is the first time it ever gave me pain to obey thy commands.

S C E N E VII.

A D A M, S E T H.

A D A M.

At length they are gone!—Oh fearful day! Oh day of anguish and of terror, when the sight of my children robs me of fortitude, and rends my heart!

S E T H.

Just heaven!—What says my father?

A D A M.

Oh, my son, my well-beloved! thou who art the brother of Abel, how wilt thou listen to the words of horror I am about to pronounce?

S E T H.

My blood refuses to flow, a horrid foretaste of ill overwhelms and terrifies me. —Adam!—my father!—what is the fearful secret thou hast to unfold?

A D A M.

Pain, terrors, tears, and unavailing repentance! Such are the inevitable consequences of the malediction which my crime hath drawn down upon our heads! On myself, and all my miserable race!—

That

That crime which deprived us all of innocence and immortality!—Oh! remorse most keen! Oh remembrance more than ever insupportable!—The Omnipotent deigned to form me after his own image, I am the work of his hands, and was created to live for ever; but, equally iniquitous and insensate, I wished to equal the Almighty! Pride and Ingratitude dug a dreadful abyss, and into it I plunged.

S E T-H.

Oh, hold, my father, hold!—Retrace not the painful image of thy misfortunes and thy fall. Never more must thou revisit the flowery arbours of Eden, in fragrance delicious; but must this fertile earth, which thy hands have cultivated and embellished, and which thy children only shall inhabit, must it therefore become a land of rigorous exile? Or wilt thou remain insensible to the gentle pleasure of reigning over grateful and obedient hearts?—Never shall man, but thee, enjoy that unlimited empire over the world which thou possessest. Thou first didst pierce the bosom of this earth, and, by thy industry, drew forth all its treasures, necessary to man. To thee we are indebted for our education, laws, possessions, religion and life. Father, legislator, benefactor and sovereign of all breathing, didst thou but consider the full extent of thy sacred rites, and the tender love of thy

B 5 children,

children, there is no misfortune which thou mightest not support.—Yet, dare I not enquire.—Alas, even when we assured thee Eliel should again be restored by the close of day, the sweet assurance seemed but to increase thy gloomy melancholy.

A D A M.

Eliel! my beloved!—Amiable and affecting image of the unhappy Abel.—
No—never shall I see thee more!

S E T H.

Heavens! What, my father, hast thou then learnt concerning this unfortunate child?

A D A M.

O Seth! O my son, I have taught thee the ways of the Almighty; I know with what resignation, with what respect thy heart will yield submissive to his holy will.—I may tell thee all! Hast thou forgot the sentence of mortality pronounced upon me?

S E T H.

My blood runs cold!

A D A M.

Lament thou mayest—murmur thou must not.—Listen; but, whilst thou
listenest,

listenest, summon thy virtue, thy fortitude, thy resignation.

SETH.

Proceed not—guard the fatal secret—continue not, my father, thus to rend my heart.

ADAM.

'Tis thy duty to hear; to receive my last sigh.

SETH.

Merciful God!

ADAM.

To day!—I die!

SETH.

Adam!—My Father!

ADAM.

Alas, no forefeeling had I of dissolution.—This night, this last night of my life, solely occupied by my children's happiness, by the union of Sunim and Selima, I drove sweet sleep from me, that I might ruminate on ideas so pleasant to the imagination; when suddenly, amidst the darkness of the night, a voice mournful, but menacing, resounded through my cabin, and called, Adam! My limbs shivered!

vered ! My hair stood upright ! My blood forgot to flow ! A colder than ice-cold sweat instantly came over me, and all the horrors of death were on me ! I heard, and knew the eternally-terrible voice of the exterminating Angel ; imagined I beheld him armed with his flaming sword ! Entranced, in horror inconceivable, I lay, while the fatal, the irrevocable sentence was pronounced :—*Adam, prepare to quit this earth, thy children, and thy mortal body ; befit thy soul for this great sacrifice : the coming day is thy last of days.*—*Before thou departest, the Angel of Death shall appear to thee, and announce the moment and the place where thou shalt expire.*

S E T H.

No, my father ; no, thou shalt not die ; thy troubled spirit hath mistook a vain dream for a heavenly warning.—No, no, thou shalt not die.

A D A M.

Cease to deceive thyself.—To-morrow ! —To-morrow, and I shall be no more.—Yet ought I to complain ? Length of days, and to people the earth have been granted me ; and, though at present my children occupy but a small part of the immense globe, for them created, yet, my descendants shall hereafter extend over its whole surface ; men shall disperse, shall cease to form one sole family.—Oh, may they

they never, however remote from each other, cease to remember they are brothers.—Alas ! were it not for the remorse that wounds and rends me thus, I should meet death with serenity. Father of the human race, I should flatter myself that my memory would everlastingly remain respectable and dear to my children.

S E T H.

Among them union shall ever reign. O how natural, how sweet it is to succour and to love a brother !—Yes, they shall fear, shall honor that Supreme Being, whose power the whole universe proclaims: they shall be happy, and shall bless thee to the end of time.

A D A M.

Alas, the world is yet in its infancy, and yet the world is already fullied by sin; the earth hath already drank the blood of the innocent !—Here, in this very place, the unfortunate, the virtuous Abel, groaned and expired, massacred by his brother !

S E T H.

Drive the memory of the cruel deed from thee, O my father, and be not thus a prey to ideal dread.—Doubt not but thy imagination hath been deceived, by the illusive terror of a dream.—When thou beholdest Eliel—

A D A M.

THE DEATH

A D A M.

Oh that I may be permitted to kiss and
bless him once more before I die!

S E T H.

Let me conjure thee, O my father, to
resist, to expel these gloomy phantasies,
troubling thus thy spirit! Thou shalt live,
for ages, a blessing to thy children.—But
thou hearest me not!—Thy countenance
changes!—My father!

A D A M.

The day is darkened!—The warb-
ling of birds is heard no more!—What
means this fearful calm!—Wherefore
these omens!

S E T H, (*Agitated.*)

Let us enter the cabin, my father.

A D A M.

Heardest thou those plaintive sounds?—
Hark! the screech owls cry!

S E T H.

O mercy!—Day disappears!

A D A M.

My son!—Where art thou?—
Come near me, Seth.—Give me thy
hand.

S E T H.

SETH.

Let me bear thee in my arms ; support thee on this palpitating bosom.—O Adam ! O my father ! nothing, no, nothing shall separate me from thee ! I will partake thy fate whatever it be. (*The noise of thunder is heard.*)

ADAM.

What unknown sounds are these, denouncing wrath ?——O prodigy, till now unheard of !——My son ! the earth trembles under our feet !——Is it the wreck of nature ?——O God ! shake not her foundations thus——Strike only me——O spare the human race, pity and spare the work of thine own hand.—(*The Angel of Death appears standing on a high rock, and is seen at intervals by the flashes of lightning.*) God of mercies !——Is it a vision ? Seth ! my son !—turn thine eyes towards that rock !

THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

Adam !

ADAM.

Messenger of my Creator and my Judge ! Angel of Death ! Here I am.

ANGEL

ANGEL OF DEATH.

Thus saith He who formed thee from the dust :—*Before the sun shall descend behind the forest of cedars, Adam must die.* And this shall be when I again appear upon this rock, when I shake it and it crumbles. Thine eyes shall not see, but thine ears shall hear, like a clap of thunder, the rock shiver ; which shall be *before the sun descends behind the forest of cedars.*

A D A M.

Say to the Omnipotent, I bend, adore and obey.—O exterminating Angel, implore him to soften the agonies of death. (*The Angel of Death disappears, and day returns.*)

S E T H.

Oh, my father!—Thy unhappy son may not survive thee !

A D A M.

It is done !—The irrevocable sentence is pronounced !——I, who came from the creative hand of the Almighty, I, not mortal born, must fall the sacrifice of death ; and, O dreadful words ! *Before the sun descends behind the forest of cedars.* Lo ! yonder is the sun ; and ere that sun goes down, I shall cease to be ! I have seen him rise ; ah, how often ! but never
more

more shall see him fet ! Darknefs shall cover the earth, and this to me shall be darknefs everlasting !

S E T H.

No ; I will not believe the Father of Mercies will remain insensible to our tears and groans ; I will seek, assemble, and conduct my brethren towards that altar, where, during so many ages, thy hand hath each day sacrificed to Jehovah. Our cries and lamentations shall penetrate and prevail : he shall have pity on thy children, and prolong thy life.

A D A M.

Forbear my son ! redouble my pangs thou mayest, change my fate thou canst not.——Ah ! how should I sustain the distracting despair of my mother ?——Spare me this inexpressible affliction.——Thee have I chosen to close my eyes ; thou, alone, of all my children, shalt be a witness of my death——alone shalt receive my last farewell.——Thy affection I know, but I have depended on thy fortitude. O stagger not mine !—Come, my son, bend we——

S E T H.

Whither goest thou, my father ?

A D A M.

A D A M.

To adore the Omnipotent. Let me once again, before I die, offer up a sacrifice. Go, fetch me flowers ; chuse me the purest milk, and bring me the sacred barley ; go, and be speedy ; thou shalt find me in my cabin.

S C E N E VIII.

S E T H, (*Alone.*)

I must see him die.——This night I no more shall have a father.——Oh that the offering up of my life might be the preservation of his !——Spare me, Almighty God, spare me this mortal anguish ; let me not hear my mother's cries : cut short my days, but oh let Adam live !

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

A C T

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

SETH, (*At the back of the Theatre with a garland of flowers and a vase, which he places upon the altar.*)

THE sacrifice is prepared!—Alas,
the last sacrifice he shall ever offer!
—He comes.

S C E N E II.

SETH, ADAM.

ADAM.

Come near, my son.—Give me thy arm.
Already my sinews tremble and shrink.
—Already my strength abandons me.
—Oh how terrible is death thus slowly
approaching, and when the mind thus
hath time to contemplate all its horrors.—Beloved and innocent victim!
O unnatural rage! O Abel! O my son,
thy death was not like unto mine. Suddenly
bathed in thy blood, thou only gavest
a groan and expired. Instantaneous
was the stroke of death; without foreknowledge,
thou wert without fear. But me
he consumes, preys gradually upon me.
I bear him in my bosom: I see him, and

see

see him inevitable, dreadful and near !——
Is the sacrifice ready, my son ?

S E T H.

The barley, the flowers, and the vase
are ready.——They are on the altar.

A D A M.

Support me. (*He approaches the altar.*)

S E T H.

Here is the fire, and here the perfumes.

ADAM, (*Throwing the perfumes on the fire,
which blazes, and scattering the barley and
shedding the milk.*)

Oh thou ! my Father and my Judge !
Essence Eternal ! Creator of all worlds !
receive this last homage.——Nothing have
I to offer, but what is thy own : nothing
but what thou gavest. Milk, pure and
delicious to the taste, and grain, precious
production of earth, so necessary to man's
existence, the blest reward of care and
labor. (*He kneels before the altar.*)——
In this, my last of days, sinking before
the sentence thy justice so lately hath pro-
nounced, I now, more than ever, feel the
vast extent of my crime, and thy ex-
cess of mercy. Ages hast thou suffered me to
live ; and this earth, which, when I first
beheld, seemed but a fearful desert, unin-
habited, as sterile as immense, now smiles
in

in fecundity. The human race, my own children, I have seen brought forth ; beheld them spread, increase and multiply.—And even now, in this day of pangs inexpressible, thou sparest me the horror of surviving the dear companion whom thy beneficent hand formed at my request.—Thou knowest my heart, see'st its penitence and its gratitude. Finish, O God of Mercies ! finish the work thou hast begun, and make this troubled, trembling heart wholly thine. Free me from those superfluous regrets, by which I am distracted, from fears and unworthy terrors, which debase and overwhelm me ; inspire me with holy resignation and decent fortitude !—Death I deserve ; but oh let me wait for and meet it without these cruel agitations ! (*Adam lets fall his joined hands, and his head upon the altar.*)

S E T H.

O ! God of Forgiveness, deign, O deign to hear his prayer !

A D A M, (*Raising himself.*)

I feel ease.

S E T H.

Come, rest upon this grassy bank.

A D A M.

Lead me.—Scarcely can I distinguish one
object

object from another.—A thick veil seems hanging before me, and clouds my sight.—Fatal veil ! How gloomy appears the day : already, to me, the glaring sun is invisible.

S E T H.

It is overspread with clouds.

A D A M.

Is it far from the forest of cedars ?—Yet, tell me not, I will ask thee anon—Hast thou, since I left thee, seen Sunim and Selima ?

S E T H.

Yes, my father, and have followed thy orders ; have dispelled their inquietude.

A D A M.

And thus, then, do my children now give themselves up to joy, making the woods resound with their sprightly songs, while their unhappy father approaches the moment when he shall quit them everlastingly.—And thou, companion of my misfortunes, Eve, what at present is thy employ.—Alas, thou art preparing for a night of festivity—And this night is to be a night of death !

S E T H.

Oh, my father !

A D A M.

A D A M.

Seth, my son, how dear art thou to me! Ah, how fully, how intimately do I feel it in these fearful moments! Nature, all nature seems to have abandoned me, except only thee!

S E T H.

Alas, had'st thou not forbade me to speak, thou would'st have seen thy other children oppressed by the same mortal despair that loads and bears me down. In this hour of horror, they all would have been at thy feet.

A D A M.

All my other children!—O Seth, forgettest thou that there exists in the world, a frantic and criminal fugitive, who owes his life to me?—This savage, this barbarian, is thy brother; and, for the first time since his crime, on this fatal, this fearful day, would'st thou think it, I feel he is my son!—Where, what is become of him? Cursed of God, and hated of man, in what remote region doth he drag his deplorable being!—Son of Misfortune, how many miseries hast thou cost me! Alas, at the moment of thy birth, thou didst distract my heart! Thy mother's groans, a spectacle of grief so new to me, thy tears and cries froze me with horror!

—And

—And when I received thee in my arms, the first child that ever saw the light, how did I wonder and shudder while I beheld and considered a creature so delicate, so fragile, and so infirm!—I durst not press thee to my bosom; no parental caresses didst thou receive; with fear and compassion I lightly held thee, thinking the slightest motion might shatter thee, or might wound—nor could I conceive how a frame so feeble and so suffering might exist. I wept while I blessed thee, and did not dare to return God thanks for the gift.—— Thus did I become a father, without becoming more happy!—Gloomy presage of the keen pangs which the child was one day to occasion!—My heart!—is loaded!—oppressed!

S E T H, (*Aside.*)

Mine is broken, while I listen.

A D A M.

Tell me, my son, are there no tidings of Eliel?

S E T H.

My brothers are not yet returned.

A D A M.

And I no more then shall see the child!
He who was the delight of my old eyes,
so mild, so compassionate, and whose ris-
ing

ing virtues and lovely form, retraced ideas so dear to memory !—Alas, last night, ere the dreadful apparition appeared, while thinking of Sunim and of Selima, I will one day, said I, also unite Eliel and Thirsa ; they seem born for each other. —O, with what joy should I form the sacred tie, which should ascertain their felicity !—Vain project ! Sweet dream that never must return !—And shall I not have the consolation to see to embrace the beloved boy once again ?—Ignorant of what may be his fate, tormenting apprehension, which I am carrying to the grave, adds intolerable weight of woe.—But should he return, should heaven restore him to the bosom of his family, thou shalt become a father to him ! Wilt thou, my son ? Dost thou promise ?

S E T H.

Yes, he shall be my child, and henceforth find in my heart, O my father, that parental care, that affection he hath found in thine.

A D A M.

Enough—I am satisfied—But how death each moment diminishes my strength !—My son, tell me when the sun approaches the forest of cedars !

S E T H.

O my father, it is yet far distant !

C

A D A M.

A D A M.

With pain I breathe the vivifying air ;
the darkness that overshades my eyes be-
comes more gloomy-thick.—Yet, ere
creation disappears, once more I wish to
contemplate a space more vast of that hap-
py land I am going eternally to quit.—
Guide me to the tomb of Abel.

S E T H.

Behold the mountain of Eden.

A D A M.

Turn me, that I may face it.—Ye pure
brooks, fruitful fields, and refreshing shades
of these rich vallies ! Dear haunts, where
I so long have drank in life and light !
Have tasted joys so innocent and sweet !
So oft, chearful and exulting, have beheld
animated nature and my own numerous
offspring ! And chiefly thou, O Eden !—
But thy delights are not to be described ;
grief, at the remembrance of them, again
pierces my heart, and thy pleasures shall
not be profaned by tears.—Adieu ! Here
I take my solemn leave !—Anon, and ye
shall be no more !—To me no more !—
Anon, this beauteous picture, which,
though faint, still charms my view ; these
heavens, this earth, the universe, all
which can seduce, can attach the mind,
shall become annihilate, shall vanish !—

Must

Must I then die?—And must all my children die too?—O anguish unutterable!—*(After a moment's silence.)* Yes, though weak, this arm, so long inured to the labours of agriculture, still perhaps retains strength enough to wield the pick-ax and the spade.—Mine hang in the cabin; fetch them, my son.

S E T H.

What meanest thou?

A D A M.

Here the ashes of Abel sleep; under the dark shadow of these cypress trees; where the most inhuman of men cut short his days.—Here will I dig my grave.

S E T H.

No, I will not go into the cabin! I will not quit thee! Thou shalt not dig thy grave! I conjure thee! in the name of the living God! not to dig thy grave!

A D A M.

Obey, I command thee.

S E T H, *(Going towards the cabin.)*

O God! fearful in judgment! thy will be done. *(Goes into the cabin.)*

C 2

A D A M.

A D A M.

His spirit groans, and his sufferings increase mine.—Piteous affection, therefore, cannot soften my woes.—No!—For me, consolation is no more!—(*Seth returns.*) Come near, my son: give me the spade.

S E T H.

I cannot support it.—O suffer me, at least, to turn away my eyes from this distracting sight. (*Goes and falls on his knees before the altar.*)

A D A M, (*Looking at the spade.*)

Innocent instrument of life and wealth, which eager necessity taught my hands to fashion; to thee, for ages, have I and my posterity owed our existence. Thee have I suspended in my cabin, as a glorious trophy of my cares and labors.—And now, (*Striking it into the earth,*) to what fatal use art thou destined? Alas!—necessary art thou to life—and necessary thou art to death! Thou gavest me the means of living, and thou diggest my grave——

Here then is my last home!—My trembling arm stiffens!—I shudder as I cast my eyes into this pit!—O horrible gulph! (*Lets the spade fall.*)—A cold sweat bathes my face!—Where am I?—Alone?—Seth! My son!

S E T H.

S E T H,

(Running hastily, and catching Adam in his arms)

My father!—Come from this fatal place.

A D A M.

What mortal terror freezes my blood!—
O my son—do not leave me again!S E T H, *(Bearing him from the grave.)*

Come to the cabin.

A D A M.

No.—Let me see the fun.—But is not
some one coming?

S E T H.

Who is this?——Heavens, it is Se-
líma!

A D A M.

Did I not forbid——

S E T H.

She runs as if in haste.

A D A M.

What has she to tell us?

C 3

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

SETH, ADAM, SELIMA.

SELIMA.

Pardon me, my father, for having come without being called.

ADAM.

Dost thou bring me news of Eliel?

SELIMA.

No, my father.—But listen to me.—A man!—Never did I behold his like! A man of fearful aspect hankers about our cabin; repeating with a thick and hollow voice, *Where is Adam?—Bring me to Adam!*—How hath he terrified me!—Certainly there be men who are not the sons of Adam!—He is not thy son, my father.

ADAM.

What kind of man? His look—

SELIMA.

Menacing.—Tall, strong, cloathed in spotted and shining skins, a massy, knotted club he bears; his features wild and savage, and his face, though sun-burnt, pale.—

pale.—And yet, O my father, he is not so pale as thou art, at this moment!

ADAM, (*Afide.*)

I scarce have power to respire! (*Aloud.*)
Was his forehead uncovered?

SELIMA.

I durst not look stedfastly, but I thought
I beheld a fearful bloody mark.—

ADAM, (*Afide to Seth.*)

'Tis Cain!—Seth, it is Cain!—Hark
the Omnipotent sent him to make death
still more dreadful?—Well then, I submit!
—Go, my son, tell him I would not see
him.—If he persists, let him come!

SETH.

My father.

ADAM.

Go, be quick.

SETH. (*Going.*)

God of benevolence, have pity on the
best, the most wretched of fathers!

S C E N E IV.

ADAM, SELIMA.

SELIMA.

Thou knowest then this fierce and savage man, my father, and thou hast never spoken of him?

ADAM.

Seth, of all my children, is the only one from whom I could not conceal his existence.

SELIMA.

Alas, the arrival of this stranger troubles and afflicts thee.—Think no more of him; do not see him, my father.—Think rather of the event which is to terminate this happy day!—To-night thou art to conduct thy Selima to the altar!

ADAM.

Yes, to-night! fears and afflictions, painful suspense, cruel incertitude, all the thorns and goads of life, this night shall to me be no more than a vain dream, fled for ever!

SELIMA.

Dear as my Sunim is to me, I know
how

how ardently my father wishes for that rapturous moment when he shall be mine? —After the setting of the sun, led by our mother, we shall come to seek thee, and to follow thee to the nuptial bower!—O, if thy children's wishes could but hasten the sun's course!—But it begins already to go down! It approaches the mountains!

A D A M.

And the forest of cedars?—

S E L I M A.

Is yet at some distance.—O may it presently sink behind their lofty heads!

A D A M, (*Aside.*)

What a wish!—And in the mouth of my child!—Great God!

S E L I M A.

I delight, my father, to see returning strength hath again enabled thee to continue thy labors.—But what pit is this? —What new work is it thou hast begun?

A D A M.

My daughter, this evening thou shall know.

C 5

S E L I M A.

S E L I M A.

Did I not hear the voice of my brother ?

A D A M.

Thou did'st

S E L I M A.

He is followed by that fearful man !

A D A M.

Go—Leave us.

S E L I M A.

I fear——I know not what !

A D A M.

He comes——Nay, be gone !

S C E N E V.

ADAM, SETH, CAIN.

A D A M.

I tremble !——My strength forsakes me.—(*Adam goes and supports himself against a tree, which stands beside the sod-seat.*)

C A I N.

Is yonder Adam ?

A D A M.

A D A M.

(Without turning or looking at Cain.)

Seth—my Son—go into my cabin—I will call thee.

S E T H.

What leave my father alone?—
No! Suffer one of thy children to remain here with thee.

A D A M.

I would speak to him without a hearer.

S E T H.

I obey.—But remember, Cain, thou art to converse with a father surrounded and beloved by his children.—Children whose lives are his. Remember that, from that cabin, I shall behold thy every action.

C A I N.

And thinkest thou me to intimidate?
—Who art thou, that darest thus to speak?

S E T H.

Wretched man!—I am the third of Adam's sons.

A D A M.

A D A M.

Enough ! Seth, leave us.

(Seth enters the cabin.)

S C E N E VI.

A D A M, C A I N.

C A I N, *(After a moment's silence.)*

Adam used not heretofore turn pale at the aspect of the unfortunate.

A D A M.

Of the unfortunate !—Man is never wholly wretched till he renounces the paths of virtue ! one only wicked, one only pitiable man, have I hitherto known.

C A I N.

Virtue ! Hath virtue remained on earth since Adam hath had children ?

A D A M.

I was proud and credulous ! God punished me ! But his chastisement was the chastisement of a father ! He left the love of virtue in my heart ; and from his bounty I received children, who fear him and adore, and who have made me happy.

C A I N.

CAIN.

And thou did'st forget then that I existed ?

ADAM.

O ! wherefore could I not ?—But why hast thou disobey'd me, Cain ? Wherefore comest thou to this peaceful retreat ?

CAIN.

To be revenged on thee, Adam.

ADAM.

Revenged !

CAIN.

Thou gavest me life !

ADAM.

Alas, as much for my misery as for thine.

CAIN.

Thy misery !—No, not thou, but I, alone, am the miserable man of the earth.

ADAM.

And thinkest thou me, then, insensible to thy pangs ?—Behold these scalding tears !

CAIN.

C A I N.

I want not thy pity—My woes are without a remedy.—Thou hatest me.—Thou hast cause ! But thou didst never love me.—It was thy indifference for me, and thy excessive love of Abel, which first rendered me the most miserable of men, and the horror of the human race !—Thy injustice made me wretched, and first engendered in this lacerated heart, fullen jealousy and vengeful hatred !—Had my father loved me, I had been innocent and happy !—Accuse thyself, barbarous man, of the mortal blow which deprived thee of a son !—Thou didst inspire that headlong fury, that terrible emotion of rage and despair.—Thee, solely must I accuse of the crime I committed, the remorse which devours me, the punishment that pursues, and the shame with which I am branded.—Thou shuddereest—turnest away thy face, and darest not look upon this bloody forehead which bears the deep and indelible stamp of Almighty vengeance ; the terrible prognostic of reprobation, which renders me an object of horror even in the very eyes of my wife and children.

A D A M.

O Cain, what a day hast thou chosen to load me with reproaches so terrible and so ill deserved !

C A I N.

CAIN.

Wandering on earth, abandoned, proscribed, thee have I fought to quench and satiate that thirst of revenge which scorches up my life.

ADAM.

Sent by the Almighty Judge, and mine, thou art.—Plaints and murmurs, therefore, from me, were crimes.—Thou see'st the agitation and the grief thou causest.—Art thou satisfied ?

CAIN.

No ; that is not sufficient vengeance.

ADAM.

What more would'st thou ?

CAIN.

Curse thee !

ADAM.

'Tis too much !—Think, Cain, the Almighty may be appeased ; his mercy may terminate thy miseries ; renew not his wrath by an outrage so furious, so detestable !—Curse not thy father !

CAIN.

C A I N.

There is no pardon for me.

A D A M.

O! curse not Adam!

C A I N.

I came to curse thee.

A D A M.

This way, come then, I will shew thee the spot where thou oughtest to curse thy father. Follow me.—Seest thou that altar?—There rest the ashes of thy brother.—Recollest thou this place of sin and death? Here was the first massacre committed that hath dishonoured humanity! Here Abel fell! That stone was stained with his blood! With that pure, that generous blood, which spouted upon me! I beheld him expire, and yet, then in that moment of intolerable anguish, I cursed thee not!—Thy crime I execrated, and my own existence!—But I cursed thee not.—And thou, merciless man—

C A I N

Where am I!—Whither, barbarian, hast thou led me?

A D A M.

A D A M.

Turn thy eyes, behold that pit.—It is my grave, which this nerveless arm but now hath dug!—The Angel of Death but now hath announced, that to day I die!

C A I N.

Die! To-day!

A D A M.

To-day!—This earth, drenched with the blood of Abel, this earth, bathed with my tears, shall hide my body!—Come, then, behold me, on the edge of that grave, into which I am about to drop! Come, and curse!

C A I N.

What horror feizes me.—What infernal fires rise, in whirlwinds, and devour me!—The altar, the fatal altar falls and crushes my heart!—By what objects of terror am I surrounded—The grave of Abel and of my father!—What plaintive cry was that I heard shrieking from the bottom of the tomb?—I trample upon the bones of Abel!—Whither fly!—Save me, heaven! What fearful phantom is this?—Is it the ghost of Adam, or of my brother!—Hold! Forbear! O drive me not headlong into the horrible gulph that gapes beneath my feet!—Vindictive shade!—Ghost of Adam, avaunt!

---And

—And have I then shed also my father's blood?—O, I sink, I sink, oppressed by torments intolerable!—(*He sinks lifeless at the foot of the altar.*)

A D A M.

Wretched son, of an unfortunate father!

S C E N E VII.

ADAM, CAIN, SETH (*Running hastily.*)

S E T H.

His distracting cries have pierced my very soul! My father!

A D A M.

Approach.—Behold to what a fearful state is he reduced by rage and remorse.—Take advantage of this trance of horror, and bear him hence.

S E T H, (*Taking him in his arms.*)

Cain expiring on the tomb of Abel!—O Eternal justice! (*He carries him to some distance.*) He sighs!—His senses return.

C A I N, (*Starting from the arms of Seth.*)

My father, have I murdered thee too?

A D A M.

A D A M.

Recover thy strayed reason.—Hear
the voice of Adam, Cain.

C A I N.

Adam!——I have cursed thee!

A D A M.

No!——Thou hast not cursed thy father. Depart, I pardon thee. May heaven have pity upon thee.

C A I N.

Heaven has snatched every blessing from me; even the poor consolation of weeping.—The source of my tears is dried up; I may not so much as express the pangs, the burning pangs that consume me, but by groans, shrieks and howlings.—Adam pardons me; my father Adam pardons me, and yet I cannot weep!——Farewell, Adam; unhappy father, for ever farewell!

S C E N E VIII.

A D A M, S E T H.

S E T H.

How wild, how distracted are his steps.

A D A M.

A D A M.

Follow him, my son, till thou see'st him beyond our dwellings; remove my children, that they meet him not. Go.—Should he speak to thee, forbear to remind him that to-day I die!

S C E N E IX.

A D A M.

He has shook my whole soul.—Dread and pity have, for a while, suspended even the terrors of death.—The violent emotions he has stirred up, seem to have re-animatèd my drooping powers.—I can walk; my body feels less cumbersome; objects are more distinct.—Yet, my last moments approach, and now, when grief well might overwhelm me, my fortitude and strength return.—Ideas of consolation, though confused, force themselves upon my imagination.—In vain would reason repel them; they inveigle and seduce my heart.—O God, is it that thou would'st only prove me? Wilt thou still deign to prolong that life which parental affection renders so dear?—Is it prescience that enlightens, or illusions that abuse me?—Alas, when mortal disobedience robbed me of happiness and immortality, thou, in the very act of justice, mercy didst make conspicuous; thou didst snatch from me the blessings I enjoyed,

ed, but thou left'st me hope. And must this delusive comforter follow man even to the grave? Can it never cease but with himself?——But, my son returns.

S C E N E X.

ADAM, SETH.

ADAM.

Where, Seth, is Cain?

SETH.

I overtook him at the nuptial bower; there, suddenly, he stopped, looked and started; the voice of Eve, my mother, struck his ear, and the wretched man wished once more to behold her who gave him birth.——Trembling, agitated and pale, he approached the bower, gently separated the foliage, and, after a momentary look, bounded with wild impetuosity, and directed his course towards the meadow.—Arrived near the cascade, he slackened his pace, and casting his eyes around, with curiosity and surprise, “I recollect
“this wild spot, said he; here no new
“plantations are seen; uncultivated it
“remains, and abandoned—for here was
“my cabin!”——In accents of ferocious lamentation, so saying, he fell upon the rock, and made the vallies resound with his groans and howlings.——As I drew near, “Stop! he cried, stop!——
“Dread

“ Dread my fury ——— Dread the murderer of Abel! thou happy son that each day receivest a father’s benediction.—Avaunt! Fly! Beware this arm, blind and senseless in its rage, red with thy brother’s blood!” Precipitate and bewildered, then, he sprang towards the mountains, darted into the forest, and there, as he wished, was lost to sight.

A D A M.

Wandering and fugitive shall he be, to the end of his deplorable life! For such is the irrevocable Fiat!

S E T H.

Dreadful destiny!—But how, my father, after a shock so violent, by what miracle art thou become less weak, less depressed?

A D A M.

I cannot, myself, conceive how.—— O, my son!—But lo! the glare of day is past; our shadows lengthen, and the sun rides o’er the fatal rock which soon must moulder into dust.——Come, come to my cabin: once again let me view it; there, once again, let me repose.

S E T H.

My father——

A D A M.

A D A M.

God of infinite beneficence! Thou beholdest me resigned; but believing, even to life's last gasp, there is nothing man may not hope from thy infinitude of bounty.

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

A D A M, S E T H.

(Adam, leaning upon Seth, comes from the cabin.)

S E T H.

IN TO what fearful agitations, my father, art thou fallen?—Alas, not long since, how calm thou wert!

A D A M.

Suddenly have I lost the use of sight!
—Certain omen of approaching destruction!—The Angel of Death predicted

ed this—*Thine eyes shall not see, but thine ears shall hear the rock shiver!*—Thick darkness is come over me!—No more shall I see the light!—No more behold my children!—Heavens! What fearful sound!—Seth!—my son!

S E T H.

My father, how thou shakest!

A D A M.

Heard I not the bursting rock?

S E T H.

O no.—The sun has not yet reached the high cedars of the forest.

A D A M.

Where are we?

S E T H.

Near the door of thy cabin.

A D A M.

Never more am I to enter that door!—My son, my strength forsakes me.—Lead me to the foot of the altar; there let me die.

S E T H.

(Bearing Adam towards the altar.)

Alas! he can no longer walk.

A D A M.

ADAM.

Am I there ?

SETH.

These are the steps.

ADAM.

Let me sit down.—Never shall I get up more !---Yonder is my grave, and never shall I quit this place, but to be thither borne !---The sword of death is suspended over my head ! An instant, and it falls !---An instant, and I shall cease to exist, shall sink to nonentity !---Yet, the Divine Spirit of the Creator, that portion of his breath, which gave this body life and feeling, ascertains my immortality.—This ray of divinity, this soul I have received, shall never become annihilate, never shall dissolve like its corruptible cloathing, which is formed but from the dust.—No, I am subject only to a change of existence.—But, great God ! what is this incomprehensible change to be ?—Alas, in my primal state, no idea of futurity troubled me ; I thought not of it.—Fortunate inhabitant of the beloved gardens of Eden, certain of never ending felicity, I tasted in the present a delicious and everlasting banquet.—Afterwards, an exile in lands less blessed, condemned to painful labours, head of an immense family, all the cares and inquietudes inseparable
D from

from that necessary but most toilsome state I have known. But my mind, attached to the present, thought but little of hereafter, and seldom sought to penetrate beyond the limits of this present life.—— Now, standing, as I do, on the dread precipice of Eternity! fearing, shuddering, I wait the terrible arm that is to project me down! that is to rend the impenetrable veil of futurity.—— Timid, trembling, I try to cast a look into black and bottomless night, and recoil with horror! Immensity of oblivion lies before me, astonishes thought, confounds reason, and freezes the soul's faculties!—— O, my son, how bitter is death!—— Thine shall be less painful; thou shalt not feel that insupportable remorse which gnaws my heart. From infancy, accustomed to know that death must come, thou, without effort, wilt resign thyself to inevitable necessity.—— But I, the workmanship of that hand that formed the universe! I, created for eternal life, innocence and happiness! O what regrets, what torments are mine!—— I am guilty, and I die!—— God himself, when he called me into life, promised me immortality: and I die!—— I have seen the Eternal—— I once was equal to angels—— I have enjoyed the bliss of angels—— and I die!

S E T H.

Father of Mercies, pity his sufferings!
—Deign to look favorably down!——

Alas,

Alas, was ever sight more worthy thy compassion!—Adam, thy noblest work, the father of men, the sovereign of the world: Adam wrestling with death! Adam expiring on the steps of the altar his own hands raised! On that sacred altar, where, during so many ages, he hath each day, with solemn sacrifice, celebrated thy power, thy beneficence and thy clemency!

A D A M.

Seth, to thee, the dearest of my children, to thy care I recommend thy mother, and the youthful Eliel; should the Almighty be pleased to restore him.—Tell him, that, even in the agonies of death, he was still in Adam's thoughts.—O Seth!—Thou wilt long survive me.—Promise me—O promise thou wilt not suffer thy children, or thy children's children—to curse my memory!

S E T H.

God of Heaven!—Could'st thou think it!

A D A M.

My crime has dragged ye all down to the grave!—The malediction I have incurred lies upon ye all!—My children must die for my guilt!—Without it they had been immortal!—And thou, thyself, O my son, thou—thou—O when thou shalt feel, as I do, the horrors of death, do not, O! do not curse thy father!

D 2

S E T H.

S E T H.

Curse!—My father!—I!—Oh, with what transport would I now resign my life to prolong his!—Providence of God!—his head declines, his features stiffen.—Adam!—My father!—My father!—My father!—Breathest thou? Livest thou?

A D A M, (*With ghastly terror.*)

Doth the rock crumble?

S E T H.

No, my father: the sun still is visible.—But wherefore are thy eyelids closed?

A D A M.

Sleep overpowers me.—My son—Do not leave me!

S E T H.

He sleeps.—Let me cover his sacred head.—O may some dream of consolation calm his troubled spirit.—But what sounds are these I hear?—Is it delusion?—Or is it the voice of my mother?—Oh! how will she support a sight like this?—Must Eve behold Adam expire?—'Tis she!—Should I meet her? Should I prevent her approach to this place of terror?—But how?—And were my father to awake and not find me?—How must I
act?

act?—She comes! She is here!—O God, deign to inspire, deign to sustain my agitated soul. (*Seth removes a little from the altar and meets his mother.*)

S C E N E II.

ADAM, (*Asleep.*)

SETH, EVE.

EVE.

Where is Adam?—O tell me, that he may participate my joy.—Seth! my son! I am the happiest of mothers!—Thy brother, our Eliel, is found!—I have seen him; I have clasped him in my arms!—I wish to prepare Adam for this excess of bliss.—I fear least the sight, unhop'd, of this dear child, should occasion transports too violent.—Yonder, near the nuptial bower, I have left the boy!—Sunim and Selima will bring him, when they come for their father to perform the ceremony.—Canst thou conceive my felicity, my son!—I and Adam are going to conduct Sunim and Selima to the altar!—And heaven hath restored our Eliel!—But guide me to thy father: delay not.

SETH.

Adam sleeps, my mother.

D 3

EVE.

E V E.

O how happy shall his waking be.

S E T H, (*Afide.*)

Oh !

E V E.

Let me call him, my son ?—Come to his cabin.

S E T H.

My mother—Adam is not where thou seekest.

E V E.

Where sleeps he then ?

S E T H.

Near the altar.

E V E.

Near the altar !

S E T H.

There has he prepared a resting place,
—and there shall he, hereafter, for ever sleep.

E V E, (*Approaching the altar.*)

Adam sleeping near the tomb of Abel !
Wherefore, my son, is his face covered ?
---And

—And why has he dug that pit?—Has Adam sought the melancholy remains of his unfortunate son!—O hide that pit from me! Hide my son's bones!

S E T H.

(Aside, looking toward the setting sun.)

The day hastily declines, the sun approaches the forest of cedars.

E V E.

Seth!-----Thy father's sleep is troubled
---And his hands!—O heaven! his hands!
How livid!

S E T H.

O, my mother!

E V E.

What would'st thou say?—Speak!--
Thou turnest pale---shuddereest.-----What
means this fearful struggle of thy passions?

S E T H.

In pity to me,---in pity to thyself,---
interrogate me not.

E V E.

Speak---Explain!

S E T H.

Fly this fatal place.

D 4

E V E.

E V E.

Thou rendest my heart.

S E T H.

(Casting himself at the feet of Eve.)

O, my mother ! by these sacred knees, which thus I press against my bosom, depart from this place !---Go hence ! avoid the horrid sight ! which, else, will, presently, present itself to thy view !

E V E.

Adam !---He breathes.---Let me see him !
(Uncovers his face.) O God !---Is it he ?---
He has fainted, my son ; he wants succour ; help me to bear him to his cabin !

S E T H.

All human succour is vain.---Heaven has spoken.---O unfortunate mother !
---The Eternal has himself pronounced the terrible sentence.

E V E.

The sentence !---Adam !---Adam !---
O miserable woman ! *(Falls into her son's arms.)*

A D A M, *(Awaking.)*

What voice, dear to my heart, recalls
me

me to life?—I heard, and to the bottom of the tomb, whither I had descended.—Seth!—My son!—Where art thou?

S E T H.

Here, at thy side.

A D A M.

What voice was it, my son, that struck my ear?—It was not thine.—Is Selima here?

E V E.

(Falling on her knees, beside Adam.)

I!—Ah! if thou can'st recollect this fainting, trembling voice—Adam—It is not the voice of Selima.

A D A M.

Eve!—Eve—my beloved!—Thou hast recalled my small remains of strength!—Eve!—Give me thy hand!

E V E.

O God! How cold is thine!

A D A M.

O thou, my dearer, better part!—I cannot see thee!—Eve!—I never shall see thee more!

D 5

E V E.

E V E.

I was created with thee, and for thee ;
 and am I condemned then to survive thee ?
 —In my day of bitterest grief, my consolation, my sole consolation, was to think, that even death itself could not separate us.—And must I remain !—Single !—Abandoned !—A prey to vengeful remorse !
 —O Adam ! It is I who have deprived thee of life !—I, wretch as I am, I seduced and taught thee guilt !—I ! I am the detested cause of all thy past and present woes ! I have robbed thee of immortality !—And I behold thee dying !—In thy sentence of condemnation, the name of Eve thine accompanied not.

A D A M.

Eve !—My beloved Eve !—Still more dear, still more beloved, even in this dreadful day of darkness !—Eve !—Live for our children.

S E T H.

Heard I not Sunim and Selima.

S C E N E III. And Last.

ADAM, EVE, SETH, SUNIM, SELIMA,
 THIRSA, ELIEL (*Led by Selima.*)

S E L I M A.

Our father is by this prepared.—Come,
 dear

dear Eliel, and run to his arms.---(*She perceives Adam.*) Mercy! What do I see?

A D A M.

Selima!---Speakest thou of Eliel?

S E T H.

My father---once again give way to joy.
—Eliel is found!—Eliel, thy son Eliel,
stands before thee.

A D A M.

Is it possible!—Do you not deceive me?
—Eliel!—Come here, Eliel! (*Eliel runs to the arms of Adam.*)—Yes; 'tis he, 'tis Eliel: my face is bathed with his tears.---
Thee I have found, but me thou must lose.—Dear boy, speak to me; that I may hear thy voice.

E L I E L.

O my father!

A D A M.

I cannot bear it.—Go---go to thy mother, my son.—(*Eliel returns weeping to Eve.*)

E V E.

No, thou hast no mother.

S E T H.

S E T H.

(Aside, looking towards the sun.)

O God! it is ended!—The sun has finished his career!—*(Aloud.)* Adam!—My father—bless thy children.

A D A M.

Has the sun disappeared?

S E T H.

Oh!—It goes down.—Already the forest begins to hide it!

A D A M.

A moment, then, and I am no more!

E V E.

God of Wrath! *(She falls into the arms of Selima and Thirsa.)*

S E L I M A.

Father of Heaven!—Hear our cry!—Behold our despair!

A D A M.

The rock is about to break.—O torment inexpressible!—Anguish unutterable!—No, I cannot overcome this intolerable horror that thus invades me.—I cannot resign myself to my fate.—God of Omnipotence! O pardon! pardon!—It is my original

original immortality which shakes through all my bones !

SETH.

My father, bless thy children.

OMNES.

Give us thy benediction.

ADAM.

Life melts away.—I cannot bless ye, my children!—The curse devours me!—I cannot bless ye! O my Creator! O Eternal Essence! remove or soften this horror ineffable!—Out of thy supreme bounty grant me a sole idea of comfort.—Let the love of thee inspire my depressed soul with fortitude and confidence.—Yes—Thou hearest me! Thou deignest to hear my last prayer!—Peace again possesses this torn heart, and I feel as if some blest healing hand shed balm into its wounds.

SETH.

Beneficence of heaven! He smiles!—Come, my mother—Selima, Sunim, Thirsa, come.—And thou, also, dear Eliel.—Here we are all, my father; give us thy benediction.

ADAM.

Approach my children.—Seth, where art thou? On thee I lay my right hand.—
On

On thee, Sunim, my left.—Draw near, Selima, Eliel, Thirsa.—Eve, join with me to bless my children. (*They all kneel.*) O! may the God of Omnipotence, that God who created your father, grant to the men who now exist, and to all their children, so long as this world shall endure, Peace.—May they remember their origin; may they not forget their brethren; may they succour and love each other; and may the most compassionate, the most humane, among them, be ever the greatest, the most rever'd!

What means this change?—The cloud of darkness which hung before my eyes, suddenly disappears.—Whither am I led?—What sight, fearful and new?—It is futurity that stands unveiled before me.—O God! restore me to darkness and ignorance!—What do I behold?—Lo! troops innumerable! furious murderers!—Lo! fields covered with men, massacred by their brethren!—And, behold! the barbarous leader of these homicides, the monster glories in his crimes!—A mad multitude crown him with laurels, and bear him in a triumphal car!—What new picture presents itself? Lo! sumptuous edifices!—Lo! dazzling matter, which never decorated, never shone in the gardens of Eden!—Therefore unnecessary to man's existence or his happiness.—Why this vain pomp?—O ferocious inhabitants of these superb habitations! Do ye, can ye, in the midst of abundance and superfluity,

fluity, refuse relief to your brethren, naked and dying with hunger?---Impious race! unnatural wretches!--Be ye cursed!--Pitiless conquerors, degenerate souls, whom pride and ostentation corrupt; ye who can behold misery, and refuse assistance, be ye cursed! In this solemn moment, may the God of Justice, who hears me, and before whom I am about to appear, may this avenging God approve and confirm the irrevocable and equitable malediction!

E V E.

O wretched human race.

A D A M.

Crimes shall be punished---Vice shall have dominion over the earth---but Virtue! daughter of Heaven! shall never be wholly banished!--I see, even to the end of time, a small select number of my children like unto Seth: children who shall merit my blessing.--And lo! a law, purer and more holy than is even the law of nature, shall be given to man; and the descendants of Seth shall behold the Deliverer, who shall redeem and save the human race.

S E T H, (*Rises terrified.*)

Heard ye the rocks resound and shake?

E V E.

E V E.

Adam!——(*The Angel of Death appears on the top of the rock.*)

S E T H.

O my father! (*The rock cracks, bursts and crumbles.*)

A D A M.

Judge of the World, I come!---Father of Heaven, protect my children!---Pardon me!——I die!

THE END.

HAGAR

H A G A R
IN THE WILDERNESS,
A SACRED DRAMA,
IN ONE ACT.

—— Han dritto, in Cielo,

Le suppliche dolenti

D'un Anima fedel. (*)

METASTASIO.

* The lamentations and prayers of the Faithful have
claims in Heaven.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

H A G A R.

ISHMAEL, Son of HAGAR and ABRAHAM.

T H E A N G E L.

The Scene is in the Wilderness.

H A G A R
IN THE
W I L D E R N E S S.

S C E N E I.

HAGAR, ISHMAEL.

H A G A R.

*(With her son in one hand, and a pitcher of
water in the other.)*

WHAT dismal prospects!--How
fearful this solitude.

I S H M A E L.

Why, my mother, don't we go back to
the house of my father, where we were so
happy?

H A G A R.

Alas, my child, Hatred and Jealousy
have driven us thence, never more to re-
turn.

I S H M A E L.

I S H M A E L.

Hatred! What have I done to deserve hatred; and how, my mother, could any one hate you?

H A G A R.

Envy, my son, makes us cruel and unjust; she is the harbinger of hatred.—— Hatred, the most odious, the vilest of all our passions.

I S H M A E L.

A feeling heart, then, surely, never can entertain hatred.

H A G A R.

A feeling heart may be led astray.—— Pride, my son, may debase and corrupt the purest mind, and make it capable of all the detested horrors of revenge.

I S H M A E L.

O, my mother, if ever I should become proud, I hope you will correct this error in me.

H A G A R.

Reason alone ought to preserve us from pride. The Author of Nature made every thing excellent; he is the origin of all our virtues, our vices are our own.

I S H M A E L.

I S H M A E L.

We are born then without pride.

H A G A R.

God inspires every heart with a salutary desire of emulation, an ardor for fame.

I S H M A E L.

Is not that self-love ?

H A G A R.

It is, my son.——Yes, it is this divine principle which makes men heroic and great.——But then, only, when it is pure, such as God gave it, and seeking the universal good of others.——Corrupt men abuse this precious gift ; with them it becomes debased, unnatural, fixed on vain and frivolous subjects ; and then 'tis pride.

I S H M A E L.

But God is good, my mother.—When we obey his laws, should he not love us ?

H A G A R.

Yes, for he is our father.

I S H M A E L.

If so, why do you weep ?—Or why are we here, helpless and alone in this wilderness

H A G A R.

H A G A R.

He watches over us, and means only to prove us.

I S H M A E L.

Yet fatigue and grief overcome us ; we have nobody to assist us, no home, no food ; how can we support so many evils ?

H A G A R.

By Fortitude, which contemns them ; by resignation, which submits without a murmur. To suffer is the lot of life, and life is a day of trial and of tempest, swift and short, succeeded by Virtue, Immortality, Glory and Felicity !——Cease we then to complain ; reflect we on the good that awaits us, and let us become worthy of these high blessings.

I S H M A E L.

Are you not afraid of Death, then, my mother ?

H A G A R.

Alas, to out-live thee, is all I fear.

I S H M A E L.

Death is nothing—'Tis momentary.—
But to endure pain, hunger and thirst—
O, my mother !

H A G A R.

H A G A R.

There is a torment, my son, still less supportable!—That of being unable to relieve whom we love.

I S H M A E L.

And have I not felt this also?—Have I not seen you weep?

H A G A R.

O, my child, could I but, by laying down my life, preserve thine!

I S H M A E L.

But what, my mother, would become of me if you were gone?

H A G A R.

O, my dear Ishmael!—Cruel Sarah! Did you hear him!—Did you see him!—Yes, even your barbarous heart would melt.—What then must be my sensations!—Come, my son, let us not sink, let us not falter: our fate is fearful, but God protects us, and can change it when he shall please.

I S H M A E L.

This wilderness produces some wild fruits, on which we may feed; but the sun

fun is so burning and thirst is so excessive
—And here are neither springs nor brooks.

H A G A R.

Perhaps we may find some.—Besides, in this pitcher, our sole remaining wealth, there is yet a little water.—It is all for thee, the last resource of maternal tenderness.

I S H M A E L.

No, but I will share it with you, my mother.

H A G A R.

By preserving thy life, only, can I prolong my own.

I S H M A E L.

My mother!

H A G A R.

What says, my child?

I S H M A E L.

I have not slept for these two days; drowsiness overcomes me: let us sit down.

H A G A R.

Come, then, and sleep, it will give thee strength.—Come and repose under the
shade

shade of this stunted shrub. (*Ishmael lies down, Hagar sits beside him, and sets down the pitcher.*)

I S H M A E L .

Won't you go to sleep too, my mother.

H A G A R .

No, I will watch over thee.

I S H M A E L .

Don't go from me while I sleep.

H A G A R .

Could I quit thee for a moment in a place like this?—His eyelids close.—Happy age!—What, so fast already?—Sleep, sleep, my child; thou no longer feelest thy woes, and mine are softened. (*Looks at him steadfastly.*)—Alas, how are his features altered! They bear the marks of suffering.—O, my son, were it not for thee, did thy plaints not rend my heart, with what fortitude would I support my fate.—But to hear thee groan—To see thy tears! O heaven, this is a punishment I know not to endure; this shakes my firmest constancy!—how he sleeps!—My poor boy, (*Kisses him.*) How do I love thee! (*Puts her hand upon his forehead.*) His face burns, the sun shines full upon it.—Is he, even when sleeping, destined to suffer?—But I will tie my veil to this branch, and form a shade.—(*She en-*

E

dea-

deavors to pull the branch to her.)—I cannot, I must rise, and untie my veil. (*As she rises she overjets the pitcher, and sheds the water.*) God of Heaven, what have I done!—This pitcher, my last hope, my sole resource of life, of my son—Miserable woman!—This water might have sufficed, at least, till to-morrow; and by then, perhaps, our researches might have discovered some spring.—(*She sinks, overwhelmed with grief, beside her son.*) O Heaven!

ISHMAEL.

My mother!

HAGAR.

Oh, my son!

ISHMAEL.

My mother, I burn.—I cannot bear it. There is an inward fire that scorches me up.

HAGAR,

(*Taking him in her arms, and covering him with her veil.*)

O God! pity my pangs; have mercy on my child!

ISHMAEL.

I am dying with thirst, my mother, a drop of water, a drop of water, and you will give me life.

HAGAR.

H A G A R.

O, my son, my son!—Must thou die!
—And am I the cause?—Pardon thy
wretched mother! She will not live when
thou art gone!

I S H M A E L.

Have you then drank all the water, my
mother?

H A G A R

What said'st thou?—O torment!

I S H M A E L.

Were there any left, and if you felt
what I feel, I am sure I should not have
drank it all.

H A G A R.

And canst thou, my son, think me so
inhuman?

I S H M A E L.

Alas, pain distracts me; I know not
what I say: pardon me.

H A G A R.

I wished to guard thee from the sun—
I rose, overset the pitcher, and robbed
thee of life!

E 2

I S H M A E L.

ISHMAEL.

No, my mother.—No—That water would not have been sufficient.

HAGAR.

Paleness overspreads him!—My son!—

ISHMAEL.

My mother—give me your hand.—
Let me kiss it once again.

HAGAR.

Thine is cold and trembling.—My child!
—He answers not!—Ishmael! Open thy
eyes!—Once again embrace thy wretch-
ed mother. (*Lays her hand upon his heart.*)
It beats still.—(*She kneels.*) O supreme
and beneficent Being, to whom all things
are possible, supporter and protector of
the unfortunate, deign on me to cast a
look!—If it be thy holy will, I submit;
but my hope and confidence in thy boun-
ty, equal my obedience.—Preserve, O
God, the treasure thou hast given me, or
condemn me not to live.—'Tis thine to
pronounce, 'tis mine to bend and obey.
(*She falls beside her son, with her hands over
her face, a long silence.*)

(*A voice is heard from the clouds.*)

Hagar!—

HAGAR.

H A G A R.

What do I hear? what voice celestial
thus re-animates my heart?—(*Sweet mu-
sic is heard.*)—Where am I?—(*An
Angel appears in the clouds, bearing a palm
in his hand; and the wilderness suddenly
changes into a beautiful country, abounding
with fruits, flowers, and foliage.*)

S C E N E II.

The ANGEL, HAGAR, ISHMAEL.

The ANGEL.

Hagar!

H A G A R.

What do I behold!—(*She looks towards
her son, who still lies motionless on the
ground.*)—O, my child!

The ANGEL, (*Descending.*)

Hagar!—Dry up thy tears.

H A G A R.

Shall my son then be restored?—But,
O Heavens! Remains he not still motion-
less!—Ishmael!—Ishmael!—'Tis past!—
He is no more!—(*She rises with impetuosity,*

E 3

runs

88 H A G A R I N T H E

runs and falls at the Angel's feet.)——Must I then, must I lose all hope?

The A N G E L.

Are not thy firmness and faith, Hagar, potent as thy obedience.

H A G A R, (*Still at the Angel's feet.*)

Yes!—I am resigned!——If God requires it, I will not even complain!—Yet my fortitude forsakes me——Fearful suspense freezes up my blood!—Would the Almighty prove my heart, or would he distract it?

The A N G E L.

Canst thou, without a murmur, sacrifice to him the only good thou hast, that beloved boy?

H A G A R.

His bounty gave—and his power may retract his benefits!——(*She rises and runs to her son.*) My son!—My son!—My son!—I call in vain!——Alas, were there a breath of life he would hear; the voice of his miserable mother would recall his senses—But my shrieks are in vain; Ishmael hears not, Ishmael answers not—Ishmael!—O name once so sweet to memory!—Beloved name!——I cannot now pronounce it but with horror!

The

The ANGEL.

Hagar, wherefore thus yield to despondency?—Thou weep'st for thy son; to thee he appeareth dead; but dost thou distrust the omnipotence of Jehovah?

HAGAR, (*Rising.*)

His omnipotence!—No!—All things to him are possible; he can bid my tears cease flowing; he can restore my son!—Frantic as I was, I have wept, and God heard, God beheld me—My excess of grief perhaps offended him—O fearful thought!—Pardon, God of Mercies, pardon my guilty transports!—Deign to look with a paternal eye upon this child! Behold his innocence, and O let not him fall the victim of the feebleness of the faults of an unfortunate mother!—O God of Goodness, let thy anger alight only on me; but O restore my son to life!—Let me but once more hear him speak, and, O father, I will remember thy bounty, adore and bless thy justice, and die!

The ANGEL.

Hagar, should not all thou beholdest retrace, or preface, his infinitude of beneficence? Hath he not transformed the fearful desert in which thou wert, into a place of plenty and delight? Shine not his power and his glory forth here magnificently conspicuous?

H A G A R.

Alas, one sole object here attracts my sight! I can behold only Ishmael dead!

The A N G E L.

Despair not, Hagar. Faithful and submissive as thou art, hast thou not reason to hope? Or is there ought impossible to that Supreme Being, who knows the secrets of thy heart? Though thy Judge, Hagar, he is thy protector. In mercy he punishes, but his benevolence is unbounded.

H A G A R.

What do I hear!—O words of consolation! O breath of the Divinity!

The A N G E L.

Lift up thine eyes!—Behold, happy Hagar, the bounty of the Most High enacts another miracle. (*The Angel touches the rock with his palm, and water spouts forth in abundance.*)

H A G A R.

O God, most worthy to be adored; all these thy benefits shall not to me be fruitless!—Thou meanest I should enjoy them, and Ishmael; therefore, shall live!

The

The ANGEL, (*Approaches Ishmael.*)

Come near, Hagar.

HAGAR.

(*Runs and falls on her knees beside her son.*)

O God of Eternal Beatitude!—My son!
—It is not delusion!—His colour returns.
—Surely I do not deceive myself. (*She takes his hand.*) No—It is no longer cold!
—Ishmael! O God of never ending goodness, finish the work thou hast begun!
(*Hagar remains for a moment in silent suspense, with her eyes attentively fixed on Ishmael.*) He looks!—He lives!—O my son!
—I die!—(*She faints upon the grass.*)

The ANGEL.

Hagar! Hagar, look up.—Praise and adore the Almighty.

HAGAR, (*Coming to herself.*)

Ishmael!

The ANGEL.

Recall thy senses, Hagar, and behold thy son.

HAGAR.

My son!—Restored to me!—And is it not a dream?

E 5

ISHMAEL.

ISHMAEL,

(Rising on his elbow.)

Where am I?

HAGAR.

My son!—My boy!—My child!—
Come to my arms, come to the happiest
of mothers!—What said I!—No, kneel,
kneel, and return the Omnipotent thanks!

ISHMAEL.

His mercy is infinite!—Yes, my mother, he has again restored us to each other.

The ANGEL.

Henceforth, Hagar, thy happiness shall be uninterrupted. God commanded me to prove thee. He is satisfied, and all thy woes are ended. Watch over thy boy, teach him the ways of virtue, inspire him with the fear and, above all, with the love of God.—That is the purest, the worthiest homage thou canst yield, the best proof of thy gratitude.

HAGAR.

Oh! can I fail in this, after all his goodness to me?

The

The A N G E L .

Let thy example, Hagar, teach desponding and insensate mortals to forbear their murmurs, and let them learn that God omits not to reward Patience, Resignation, Fortitude and Virtue. 2

T H E E N D .

THE

THE
SACRIFICE
OF
ISAAC,
A SACRED DRAMA,
IN TWO ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ABRAHAM.

SARAH.

ISAAC.

GAMARIAH, an old Servant of ABRAHAM.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SEVERAL authors have treated this subject; among others, Metaſtaſio, Father Brumoy, Father Porée, and the author of a poem, imitated from the German, and entitled, *Les Noces Patriarchales*, or the Patriarchal Nuptials. Metaſtaſio is known not to have been happy in his manner of treating ſubjects taken from the Holy Scriptures, nor can we find, in his *Iſaac*, his *St. Heléna*, *Bethulia preſerved*, *Joſeph made known to his Brethren*, &c. the grace, the feeling, the genius of the author of *Artaxerxes*, *Themiſtocles*, *Regulus*, &c. The *Iſaac* of Father Brumoy is in five acts, and appears to me unequal, inſipid, and extravagant. The author has introduced *Iſhmael*, who, from converſations overheard and ill underſtood, and an infinity of light, trifling expedients, is perſuaded that his father means to ſacrifice him, which produces ſcenes that are as tireſome as they are feeble. There is, however, an ingenious incident and intereſting ſcene in the piece, of which the author has not known how to profit.—*Abraham* finds *Iſaac* aſleep, and is tempted then to kill him; but, reflecting that *Iſaac* is to periſh for his God, he will not ſuffer him to expire without knowing that he is ſacrificed. I have taken nothing from any of the works I have cited,
the

the principal defect of which, in my opinion, is the promptitude and ease with which Abraham goes to this terrible sacrifice. He undoubtedly should be represented as submissive and resigned; but still as a father. What picture can please if it be not painted after nature? I have endeavored to mingle paternal affection with blind obedience: not by hesitation, or emotions of failure in his duty towards God, but by reflections and sensations, which religion itself naturally inspires. I feel all the deficiencies of this short piece, yet perhaps there will more of truth and nature be found in it, than in any hitherto written on the same subject.

T H E
S A C R I F I C E
O F
I S A A C.

A C T I.
S C E N E I.
ABRAHAM, GAMARIAH.

ABRAHAM.

BEHOLD the day which I have each year held holy since the Lord heard my prayers, and made me the joyful father of Isaac.—O happy birth-day of my son! Marked shalt thou be by feasts and solemn sacrifices, so long as Abraham shall exist upon the earth.

GAMARIAH.

I have followed your orders ; the preparations, for the sacrifice and the feast,
are

are ready. Isaac, himself, at day-break, chose, from among your numerous flocks, a milk-white lamb, and, after bedecking him with flowers, led him to the altar, raised and covered with green fods. There, with joined hands lifted to heaven, "Yes," said he, innocent and pure victim, thou shalt this day be an offering to the Lord, and never sure was sacrifice more affecting, more pleasing in his eyes."—Thus speaking, Isaac seemed inspired; I listened, and beheld him with surprize, thought I heard an oracle, and recalled to memory those divine guests whom formerly you entertained. Angels descended, from the throne of God, to announce his birth!

A B R A H A M.

Yes, Isaac is lovely in the Lord's eyes.——I cannot doubt it—His virtues, his innocence have drawn down the divine protection, for which I have the warrant of God himself.——The descendants of Isaac shall multiply, shall form a people celebrated through all lands, and spread over the face of the whole earth. Such are the promises of the Omnipotent.——Think then, Gamariah, if the child be not dear to me! The felicity and glory of my old age, the sole hope of my house, in him I see the happy root of a multitudinous posterity.

GAMARIAH.

GAMARIAH.

He comes—To seek you, no doubt.

ABRAHAM.

I shall sacrifice near the wood, upon the mountain; thither bear the flowers, the perfumes, and the victim. When all is ready, come and let me know.

SCENE II.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC.

ISAAC.

My father, hasten to offer up the sacrifice; thus my mother entreats.——
The banquetting-hall is ready, full of guests, who wait thy presence with impatience!——Oh day! oh feast!——
The feast of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the happy object of so many attentions, of so much joy!——Oh, wherefore, my father, may I not procure my parents all that felicity they bestow on me?

ABRAHAM.

Thy wish is gratified, my son---thou dost.——Yes, Isaac, well may'st thou be happy! The only beloved of those who gave thee birth! Heaven's favorite! The
Omnipotent

Omnipotent by me would reveal the same he destines to thy posterity. Of all the nations of earth, thy descendants, alone, shall become *the People of God*.-----Thou art the dear bond of the covenant, which the Lord hath deigned to conclude with me.-----Thy birth was a miracle!-----God, for thy sake, reversing the immutable laws of nature, ordained that she, whom age had long deprived of the sweet hope of becoming a mother, should bring thee forth.-----Recall to mind, each day, all these benefits, that thou may'st for ever preserve the strong gratitude with which, at present, thy heart is penetrated.

I S A A C.

Fear not that a sentiment, so dear to my bosom, may be enfeebled by time: This profound, this durable gratitude, never can be effaced. The Most High hath given me the tenderest of mothers, and I am the son of Abraham.-----Oh! how sensibly do I feel how much I owe his goodness!-----Thanks, only, have I hitherto had cause to give; from the moment of my birth, his favours, his blessings have been heaped upon me. Happy, doubly happy, in the affection of the dear authors of my days, inquietude or grief have hitherto never disturbed my felicity; never have my eyes shed tears, except the tears of tenderness and joy; never was bliss equal to mine.-----Oh, how dear to
me

me is life!—Yes, be assured, my father, I am too happy to become ungrateful. The enjoyments of my existence are too exquisite, for me ever to forget to bless my Creator.

ABRAHAM.

Dear boy; delight of my old age!—
Yes, thou justifiest my best hopes!—
But Gamariah returns not.

ISAAC.

Shall I seek him?

ABRAHAM.

He is upon the mountain.

ISAAC.

When all is ready for the sacrifice, I will return.

ABRAHAM.

Go, my son—Haste—Thou'lt find me here.

SCENE III.

ABRAHAM.

How dear the child is to me!—Oh thou who gavest him! God of all good gifts! deign favorably to receive the sacrifice

fice I am about to offer. From the heaven of heavens, look down for a moment on this peaceable and fortunate spot! Here behold the happiest of fathers, the most thankful of men! Celebrating the birth of Isaac, I celebrate the most precious of thy benefits: nor can my heart swell with paternal love, or yield to transports of joy so pure, without lifting itself to thee; without adoring the origin of all these bounties.—But what sounds are these! —Is it illusion?—What harmonious concerts thus fill the vaulted heavens!—What do I behold! God of Goodness! (*An Angel borne upon a cloud appears in the air.*) And shall descending Angels again honor, with their presence, my humble habitation! (*The cloud and the Angel descend to earth.*)

S C E N E IV.

ABRAHAM and the ANGEL.

ABRAHAM.

Oh! divine messenger of the Almighty! And comest thou to announce some new benefits? (*Abraham kneels on one knee, and raises his arms towards the Angel.*)

ANGEL.

Abraham!—Give ear, attentively, to the commandment of the Lord, from whom thou holdest life, and all that thou pos-

possest.—The son he hath given thee, he re-demands.——In the approaching sacrifice, the blood of Isaac must be shed upon the altar. Thy arm, this very day, must immolate the victim!——Such is the mandate of the Almighty. (*The cloud rises and the Angel disappears.*)

S C E N E V.

A B R A H A M,

(*After a long interval of silence.*)

And breathe I still?—Yes! the thunder-bolt hath struck me, and I still exist!——I have heard the dreadful sentence, and did not die!—(*He falls upon the grass bank.*) Where am I?—All around me is changed!—What formidable and invisible arm hath transported me into this place of horror?—What frightful objects environ me? (*He rises.*)—Let me fly!—But every where I find the bloody altar—the murdering knife—the menacing voice which commands me to seize the poniard and pierce my own heart!——And what have I done?—What is my crime?—O God!—Yes, blood must be shed!—My dearest, best blood!—An irresistible power impels me forward.—My unnatural hand must plunge the reeking steel to his heart!—To my heart!—Oh, horrible office!—And can I not die? (*He falls upon the bank.*—*Long silence.*) The thick cloud, which hung before my heavy

heavy eyes, vanishes, and fearful Truth stands unveiled before me: yet I recover strayed reason only to suffer torments a thousand times more cruel.—Oh thou, whom name I dare not; thou, whose name I cannot pronounce without despair, without shuddering in anguish and in horror; innocent and pure victim, to death devoted!—Where art thou?—God of my fathers! God! beneficent and just, is it possible that a crime like this can give thee pleasure?—And where are they who shall fulfil thy promises?—But, created blindly to obey thee, is it for me to comprehend, to conceive the depth of thy designs?—I submit.—Oh, that thou hadst but demanded my life!—Wretched Sarah!—Thou preparest the banquet!—I hear the rustic instruments.—But soon shall that house, where now reign happiness and joy—a moment, and that peaceful house shall become a place of mourning and lamentations eternal!—Have I then enjoyed felicity so unmixed, only the more poignantly to feel this full extent of horror?—Oh, my son!—My son!—And must the bands, by which we are united, so soon be broken!—And, by what hand?—Just heaven!—My son!—He will presently return!—How shall I sustain his presence?—Oh, unfortunate object of divine wrath, may some salutary foreknowledge enlighten thee, show thee the dreadful precipice where thou standest; may'st thou fly, far, far

far from this place of death and terror!—Administ'ring angels protect your image.——Bear him far from the dangers by which he is menaced.——Oh, deign to transport him unto some asylum inaccessible to his wretched father!—What do I say, frantic as I am!——What succour shall I dare implore when God himself has pronounced the fatal sentence?—But hark!—Some one comes.—I tremble.—I shudder.—It is he!——Great God—It is he!——I am no more myself.——Strength, fortitude, reason, all forsake me.——I hear him!——I see him!——Oh God! snatch from me this detested life!

S C E N E VI.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC,

(With the poniard in his hand.)

ISAAC.

Come, my father, come, the victim is ready. Here is the sacred knife; delay no longer.—But what do I see!——Alas!——Why art thou so pale, my father?

ABRAHAM.

Be gone!—Leave me!

ISAAC.

What mortal terrors comes over me!

F

ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM.

Approach me not! The sight of that murderous weapon makes my blood recoil with horror!

ISAAC.

Just heaven! What fearful language is this?

ABRAHAM.

Approach me not!

ISAAC.

Doth my father refuse my embraces?

ABRAHAM.

Thy presence murders me.—Fly, miserable boy!

ISAAC.

What is my guilt? Alas! my fault at least hath been involuntary.—Oh, my father, behold my tears.—Behold my grief—and deign to pardon. (*Falls on his knees.*)

ABRAHAM.

Wretched child!—Thou no longer hast a father!

ISAAC.

I S A A C.

O God! is it possible?—Doth Abraham sentence me to death!

A B R A H A M.

No!—I cannot—Forbear!—Hold me not!

I S A A C.

I will die at your feet.

A B R A H A M.

Dread this desperate arm!

I S A A C.

Pardon me, and take my life; I shall die content.

A B R A H A M.

No!—Fly!—Live!—I know not what I say.

I S A A C.

Oh, in pity, be explicit.

A B R A H A M.

Pity! I cannot pity without guilt.—
Thou rendest my heart, makest it impious.
—Hearest thou the thunder rumble over

110 THE SACRIFICE

our heads?—Seest thou the dreadful gulph
that opens beneath our feet?

I S A A C,

(Arising with affright.)

God of Mercies!—My father!—
He staggers!—His eyes are closed!—
(Isaac catches him in his arms.) Oh, my
father, by what vain terrors art thou de-
ceived?—What can occasion the fright-
ful inquietudes by which thou art agitated?

A B R A H A M.

My son!

I S A A C.

O grateful word!—Life-restoring
name!

A B R A H A M.

Oh!—Were it but possible, by sacrific-
ing myself—Leave me awhile—Let me
begone.

I S A A C.

Whither wouldest thou go?

A B R A H A M.

Seek the Lord in prayer.

I S A A C.

OF ISAAC.

III

ISAAC.

Let us pray together.

ABRAHAM,

(Departing precipitately.)

I would be alone.

ISAAC, *(Following.)*

No—I may not obey—I must not quit
my father thus.

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

A B R A H A M.

I HAVE escaped from his arms.—
The unfortunate boy is still ignorant
of his destiny.—But wherefore escaped !
What is my design ; what my hope ?—
Oh God ! behold me submissive !——
But can I render my heart insensible to the
most sacred feelings of nature ?——Yes—
Yes—even that I can, if such be thy will.
——Oh eternal Being ! Sacred source
of Justice and of Truth ! Can'st thou ex-
act things impossible ? Alas !—Yet can I
wonder that my feeble reason is unable to
comprehend thee ?—Ought I not rather to
rest confident, that, supported by thee, I
shall possess sufficient fortitude to obey ?—
Of myself, I nothing can—but thy assist-
ance I can implore.—Yes !—The creator
of man and of the universe hath power
to raise me above humanity !——Be it
so.——I will speak, I will pronounce
—his sentence and my own.——But
how !—How pronounce, how impart the
dreadful revelation ?—My blood freezes !
I start, as the idea rises, and quake with
very horror !——What then shall I do
when I hear, when I behold him ?——

Hark !

Hark!——He comes!—God Omnipotent! who can'st all things, inspire, support me! Oh! make my strength and fortitude like unto my resignation!

S C E N E II.

A B R A H A M, I S A A C.

I S A A C.

Have I found thee, at last, O my father? Fly not thus, thy unhappy son.—In the name of Heaven, fly not; but deign to hear and answer me!

A B R A H A M.

Approach, my son; draw near.

I S A A C.

Unhoped-for happiness!——My father!——Ceasest thou to fly me then?

A B R A H A M.

Thou wilt——and Heaven ordains!——Speak I must!——Yet the sound expires on my trembling lips!

ISAAC.

What hast thou to reveal ?

ABRAHAM.

Misery !—Exquisite misery !

ISAAC.

How have I offended ?

ABRAHAM.

Never !—Never wert thou more dear !

ISAAC.

Ah ! If so, is there for thee, or me, my father, a possibility of misery ?

ABRAHAM.

Such is the horror of thy fate, the horror of mine, that, the more intense our mutual affection, the more intolerable our misery !

§

ISAAC.

No, my father ! No ! Affliction cannot be found, which, consoled by thy tenderness, I could not support !

ABRA-

ABRAHAM.

Ah!——Dost thou know——

ISAAC.

What?——Speak.

ABRAHAM.

Speak!——Can I?

ISAAC.

Wherefore thus pale?——Why these tears?——Spite of myself, I tremble!— Yet danger menaces not, nor thy life, nor my mother's.—May ye live!—God protects us.

ABRAHAM.

What sayest thou?——Oh!—— My son! God no longer protects thy wretched father!——Stricken I am by the awful arm of Omnipotence!

ISAAC.

What do I hear?—And the covenant he made with us——

ABRAHAM.

Is broken.

I S A A C.

The word of Jehovah broken !

A B R A H A M.

Stop!—Add not to the evils that overwhelm me!—Weep with me; but, like me, without a murmur!

I S A A C.

Ah! can this heart, formed by Abraham, for an instant, cease to be submissive to the will of the Almighty?—But, if thee his justice threaten, me, especially, would he punish!—I have not adored him with the same ardor! I, alone, no doubt, am criminal!—Thy long, thy pious labors, thy love of him, the acts of thy whole life, assure thee his protection.—His wrath cannot alight but on my head!—Ah! wherefore must paternal tenderness make thee participate my guilt?

A B R A H A M.

Guilt!—Thou guilty!—Ah, my son! Dear object of my soul's best affections!—Enjoy, at least, enjoy the sole good that remains for thee: let the sweet testimony of a conscience void of crime, be thy consolation, in this terrible moment!

I S A A C.

I S A A C.

My father not in wrath with me, myself not guilty, and yet thou weepest over my fate!—Oh deign to explain this impenetrable mystery!

A B R A H A M.

God, himself, hath pronounced the fatal sentence!

I S A A C.

Proceed!

A B R A H A M.

Seest thou my look? Beholdest thou how I tremble? Spectator of my terror and despair, do these inform thee not?

I S A A C.

Is my life in danger?—My father answereth not!—His groans are redoubled! I am about to die!

A B R A H A M.

Come to my arms!—Come and receive the last embraces of the most miserable of fathers!—Unhappy boy, thou weepest——

I S A A C.

I S A A C.

I cannot forbear.——Life was dear to me.—I made my parents happy.—And to-day!—To-day?——Is it to-day!——Wherefore silent!—Alas! Silence is an answer.——A fearful answer!—Oh leave me not!—Oh suffer me to expire, gently, in your arms!

A B R A H A M.

Oh! Thou, who sustaineſt life, in this moment of ineffable horror! Thou who givest me ſtrength to hear and ſee—him!——Iſaac!——My child!——Without ſinking under the intolerable torments I undergo, compleat, make perfect, the triumph of piety over nature! that, inſpired by thee, and the love of thee, I may inform my unhappy child of the dreadful and bloody command thou haſt impoſed upon me!

I S A A C.

God of Mercies!—What haſt thou yet to ſay, my father?

A B R A H A M.

Approach!—Die thou muſt!—A moment only haſt thou lived!—But thy life was happy and innocent, and thy death ſhall be glorious!

I S A A C.

ISAAC.

Thou re-animatest my sunk heart!—
Is our country in danger?—Am I to fight
in her defence?—May I, before I expire,
triumph over her enemies?

ABRAHAM.

No. For thee a heavier destiny is reserved!—Bless the Omnipotent!—Elevate thy soul, even to the throne of God, who created thee!—It is for him! For thy God thou art to die!

ISAAC.

And how?

ABRAHAM.

Upon his altar!

ISAAC.

His altar?—Me!—The victim by God demanded?—Must blood, human blood, stream upon the altar of the Almighty?—What said I?—Oh pardon, pardon this first emotion of surprise and terror!—Let the decrees of the God of Abraham be adored!—The God of my father!—And let me be an obedient victim to his justice!—But who—Who shall perform this sacrifice?

ABRA-

ABRAHAM.

Learn the extent—the whole horror of
my destiny! The excess of my despair!
—Seest thou this paternal arm?

ISAAC.

I shudder!—Thou!—My father!—
Thou!

ABRAHAM.

It is enough.—I submit!

ISAAC.

Oh, most unfortunate of men!—
Ah! for thee! for thee, only, now I
weep!—Oh! give me that trembling
hand! Let me water it with my tears,
and let it, once more, be laid, in be-
nediction, on my head, before it pierces
this breast! (*He kneels.*)—Quickly, O
my father, rid me of life! I cannot sup-
port this horrid expectation of the blow
by which it is to be terminated!—Haste!
—Obey!—Doubt not but God will find
a recompence proportionate to the sacri-
fice he requires..

ABRAHAM.

Not on earth can his justice mean it.
——What recompence shall there
be, for me, when thou art no more?
——Thinkest

———Thinkest thou I may survive thee?

ISAAC.

Live to comfort my unhappy mother.

ABRAHAM.

To comfort!——The murderer of the son comfort the mother!—No, no!——The gory knife will cut every knot of affection by which we were united!——The sacred titles of husband and of father it will annihilate!——In one sole moment must I lose the dear companion of my happiness, and the son who was the only object of my hopes!

ISAAC.

What shall be the sufferings of my parents? Oh end this excruciating suspense!——In pity, my father, prolong not the torments I endure!——Come, let me shew thee to the altar!——Come.

ABRAHAM.

Stop!

ISAAC.

By thus delaying, thou mayest offend Heaven—And I the cause! This idea,
alone,

alone, would inspire me with the fortitude I want!—Come!

ABRAHAM.

A moment!

ISAAC.

Let us obey, my father!

ABRAHAM.

Inspired by Jehovah thou art!

ISAAC.

He will deign to support and guide thee, my father.—Follow me!

ABRAHAM.

O God! Thou knowest my heart; thou seest the internal struggles by which it is rent; but thou seest also my resignation!—I go!—To the altar!—There, doubtless, I shall find strength supernatural!—For, in the present moment, possible I cannot conceive it to seize the murderous knife, and not instantly expire!—But thou ordainest, the victim is resigned, and I submit.—Thou wilt guide my faltering hand.—Thou wilt not suffer this ardor of obedience should be vain and superfluous.—Come, my son!—

ISAAC.

I S A A C.

Let us go!—But what voice was that?
—My father?

A B R A H A M.

Oh misery!—'Tis Sarah!

I S A A C.

My mother!

A B R A H A M.

We cannot shun her!

I S A A C.

Shall I then kiss her, once more, before I die?

A B R A H A M.

Beware, Oh! beware that thou betrayest us not!

I S A A C.

Fear not, my father!—Would I, before I die, aggravate my woes, by beholding her distracting grief?—She comes!

A B R A H A M.

God of my fathers, grant us strength to support this new trial!

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

SARAH, ABRAHAM, ISAAC.

S A R A H.

At last, I have found ye.—Abraham, hast thou offered up the sacrifice?

A B R A H A M.

Together we are going to the mountain.

S A R A H.

And wherefore hast thou so long delayed? The chambers and the tables are adorned with flowers, and with garlands, which I myself have woven. The banquet is ready; our friends are waiting.—And thou, art thou not affected by their impatience? Partakest thou not of all the joys which this returning happy day inspires?

A B R A H A M.

Sarah!——Thou should'st know my heart!

S A R A H.

Did I not know it, I should be less surprised

prised at this tardiness.——But come, then hasten!——Must Isaac go too?

I S A A C.

Yes, my mother—I must —But, before I quit you, give your son one more kiss.

S A R A H.

Isaac!——Thy heart seems full!—Tears are in thy eyes!

I S A A C.

It is my love for thee, my mother, that makes them flow.

S A R A H.

Happy mother that I am!

I S A A C.

At this moment, it seems as if my duty required I should have been more anxious for thy happiness, O my mother, than even for my father's!—Hast thou always been satisfied with the proofs I have given of my love, my gratitude? Have I not been guilty of involuntary offences?—Oh! if I have—Forget! Pardon them!—Oh, my mother!—Bless thy son!

S A R A H.

S A R A H.

And hast thou not then my benediction; every moment of my life?—Such is my excess of happiness, I have nothing to ask of heaven, either for thy glory or thy good.——The promises of the beneficent Jehovah have given me to enjoy the things that are yet to come!—One sole vow have I formed.—It is, that my son may always preserve the same tenderness for me that he hath this day shewn.——Banish thy vain fears, dear Isaac!——Never! No, never was there child who more inspired, or who better deserved affection!

I S A A C.

How dear is this assurance to my heart!—It is enough!—My father!—I am ready to go with thee!

A B R A H A M.

My son!——Thy mother still would speak to thee—Sarah!——Hast thou nothing more to say?

S A R A H.

No. Let me not keep ye. Go, Abraham, go. At the moment of sacrifice think, both of you, remember the happy Sarah! With the homage of your vows,
may

may my gratitude be an offering grateful to the Lord!

ISAAC.

Come, my father!

ABRAHAM, (*Aside.*)

Oh God! (*Aloud in a firm tone.*) Come, my son!

ISAAC.

Farewell, my mother!—Farewell!

SCENE IV.

SARAH, (*Alone.*)

How significantly!—How strangely did he bid me farewell!—How affecting was his voice! I hear it still!—And wherefore farewell? Are they not to return? Am I not to see them in a moment?—My whole soul is shook!—Nor can my reason vanquish the inconceivable agitation with which I am seized!—Would I durst join them!—I should interrupt the sacrifice—I must remain and wait.—What have I to fear? I know not, and yet I tremble!—Each recollection, each suc-

succeeding thought increases my anxiety !
 ——He wept, and his hand trembled !
 ——Clasping mine—Abraham was pale and
 speechless !——Did they conceal some
 misfortune from me ? A farewell so
 mournful !——So unaccountable !——
 Are they departed ? Are they obliged to
 leave me and meet the enemy ?——Scarcely
 can I respire !——Dreadful idea !——I
 will run to seek them ! What do I behold !
 Gamariah in tears ! What has he to an-
 nounce ?

S C E N E V.

S A R A H, G A M A R I A H.

S A R A H.

What meanest thou, Gamariah ?——
 Stop !—Speak !

G A M A R I A H.

Wretched Sarah !

S A R A H.

Speak !—Isaac—

G A M A R I A H.

Alas ! I beheld !—I was a spectator !—
 Knowest

Knowest thou not the sanguinary command?

S A R A H.

Proceed————

G A M A R I A H.

What is it thou askest?—Abraham, resigned to the will of God, hath offered up the fatal sacrifice!—I could not support the horrid sight!—Wild, and lost in anguish, I fled! Precipitately fled, at the very instant when my astonished eyes beheld the most unfortunate of fathers seize the sacred knife, to sacrifice his son!

S A R A H.

Isaac!—I die!—(*She falls senseless.*)

G A M A R I A H.

Horrors seize and subdue her!—Senseless she lies!—Ah! wherefore hath heaven prolonged my life to this deplorable day?—But what sounds are these I hear?—Mercy!—It is the voice of Abraham!—God of heaven, can I believe my eyes?—Isaac!—Yes!—It is Isaac!

S C E N E

SCENE VI.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC, GAMARIAH,

SARAH, (*Still senseless.*)

GAMARIAH,

(*Running towards Abraham.*)

Oh! my lord and master! By what miracle?

ABRAHAM.

Gamariah! Bless we the true God!—
The God of Abraham!—He is satisfied,
and my son lives!—But Sarah!

ISAAC.

My mother!—Where is she?

GAMARIAH,

(*Pointing to her.*)

Behold how she sunk at the fatal re-
cital.

ISAAC.

My mother!—My mother!—
O hear

O hear my voice!—Isaac, your happy Isaac, kneels beside you!

ABRAHAM.

She recovers.—Support her. (*Isaac takes her up in his arms.*) She sighs.—Leave me to prepare her for that excess of joy which must succeed her sudden despair.—Stand apart, my son, for a moment.

ISAAC.

Severe command!

ABRAHAM.

Fear else some fatal revolution.

ISAAC.

I obey.

ABRAHAM.

Go, my son, thou shalt presently be recalled.

G

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

A B R A H A M, S A R A H.

S A R A H, (*Wildly.*)

My son!—Isaac!—Who art thou?
Abraham?—Inhuman man! (*She rises,
and recoils from Abraham.*)

A B R A H A M.

Sarah!

S A R A H,

(*Approaching again.*)

My son!—Where is my son?—He
is dead!—Stab here, also!

A B R A H A M.

Hear me, Sarah.

S A R A H.

Expect not, from me, nor reason, nor
affection, nor fortitude.—No! barba-
rian!—I am a mother!—I know thee not!
—Thou hast no wife?—Fly!—Aban-
don a miserable woman!

A B R A H A M.

Thou hatest me then?

S A R A H.

S A R A H.

I hate, I abhor, the very sun, by which we are enlightened!—Let me die!—I cannot support the sight of thee!

A B R A H A M.

Sarah refuses to hear me?

S A R A H.

What is thy hope?—Thinkest thou to comfort me?—Wretched man, dost thou offer thy hand to dry my tears?—Thy bloody hand?—~~I shudder!~~—And thou!—Thou! man of blood! hast committed the execrable act!—Abraham is the assassin of Isaac!—~~And livest thou?~~—Appearest thou here in a mother's sight?—Yes, here thou standest! Calm! Unfeeling! Of sufferings like mine incapable!—No, alike inaccessible to pity and remorse, thou canst not even conceive the torments I endure!—Thou!—Proud of thy ferocity, thou seekest me but to brave my grief! To vaunt of thy ready obedience!—To see me die, shrieking in despair!

A B R A H A M.

Forbear, Sarah?—Forbear!—Accuse, hate me; but respect thy God!

G 2

S A R A H.

S A R A H.

Alas ! he knows the unutterable anguish that rends this maternal heart !—Therefore, not from me would he ask the performance of the sacrifice of horror, which, from thee, has found consummation !—Yet ! distracted as I am ! Wild and despairing ! Still let me adore the author of my being !

A B R A H A M.

Not from thee, or me, doth he require all thou dost imagine.—But, did he, would'st thou rebel against his holy will ?—Oh, Sarah ! Thou yet hast time !—Thou yet mayest expiate these guilty transports !—Mayest merit !—Ah ! were it possible for me to restore thee to reason ! To make thee a glorious companion in obedience ! In these new and yet stronger ties which resignation has formed ! Then would the ultimate wish of my heart be accomplished !—Look upwards, Sarah ; open thy eyes, acknowledge thy error, the strong delusion of thy soul !—Thou wouldest abandon me !—Wouldest die !—Is to die then permitted thee ?—And canst thou abjure the vow that made thee mine ?—Am I guilty ?—Then shouldest thou pity and live to console me.—Recall the history of our loves !—Have I not beheld thee proud of my exploits, my long labors

bers and renown? Thou hast partook of my glory and my happiness; but my misery wouldst thou leave me singly to support! And art thou then but the faithful companion to prosperity?—Wouldst thou cowardly quit me, then when most I need thy succour and support? And is the title of wife less dear to thee than that of mother?—Ere the birth of thy son, did'st thou not promise all things to forsake, and consecrate thy life to me?—And now, to me ungrateful and perjured, rebellious towards God, thou wouldst break the holy bands by which we are united, and dost refuse submission to the will of the Omnipotent!—He! sole giver of all good! Sovereign arbiter of the perishable beings he hath created! hath he ever promised to man felicity uninterrupted? Or can such felicity be the lot of life so short; in frailty so inherent?—Sarah!—The borders of eternity we both approach!—Hitherto the benefactions of Jehovah have been heaped upon us!—Let us not murmur out the few moments that remain!—Is it then so difficult with fortitude, when on the brink of the grave, to support a passing grief, when immortality shall be the reward of patience and resignation?

S A R A H

What words are these!—What new sight breaks in upon me!—God himself, yes, Abraham, God himself, seems to

Speak from thy mouth.—Oh pardon!
 Pardon! My guilty frenzy pardon!—Alas!
 promise thee to live I cannot; but fly
 thee I will not! Thou shalt receive my
 last sigh! No more shalt hear reproaches
 from me! Without complaining will I
 suffer and submit!

A B R A H A M.

Lord God of Hosts! Thou hearest!—
 Submissive, she participates the merit of
 the sacrifice I have been offering to thee!
 —Yes! She is submissive!—Sarah!—
 Thinkest thou the power of the Almighty
 is bounded?—Oh! Joy still may re-
 vive in thy heart.

S A R A H.

Joy!—No!—From me it is for
 ever fled.

A B R A H A M.

From the depths of misery, the recol-
 lection of HIS supreme bounty still should
 preserve us from despair: for in the
 blackest abyfs of night, the righteous still
 may invoke HIM, still may expect a
 blessing!

S A R A H.

What blessing may I invoke? I have
 no more a son!

A B R A-

ABRAHAM.

Pray for the reward of thy resignation to his will—and thy prayer shall be heard!

SARAH.

What sayest thou? Joy beams upon thy countenance, and brightens in thine eye!

ABRAHAM.

Ever adore and bless we the Eternal!
—Happiness shall be thine!

SARAH.

Providence of God! Dost thou not deceive me?

ABRAHAM.

Examine my looks!—Readeſt thou not thy destiny, and mine, upon my brow?

SARAH.

Scarcely can I breathe!—Speak!—
Say!—

ABRAHAM.

Thy son—

G 4

SARAH.

S A R A H.

Proceed !

A B R A H A M.

Is restored !

S A R A H.

God of Goodness !——Restored ?

A B R A H A M.

Thine eyes shall behold !

S A R A H,

(Falling on her knee.)

God of innumerable mercies, from whom, this moment, I receive new life !
 ——Ere I again behold my son, ere listen to his voice, or fold him to my heart, to thee let me offer the homage of deep gratitude ! To thee ! To thee are due these first, these vast, emotions of joy !

A B R A H A M,

(Beholding Sarah.)

O moment of bliss !

S A R A H,

SARAH, (*Rising.*)

Abraham!—Lead, guide me!—My
son!—Where is he?

ABRAHAM,

(*Raising his voice.*)

Isaac!—Come forth!—Appear!

G 5

SCENE

SCENE VIII, And Last.

ABRAHAM, SARAH, ISAAC.

ISAAC,

(Falling into his mother's arms.)

My mother!

SARAH.

My son!

ABRAHAM.

Oh omnipotent mercy!

SARAH.

Isaac!—My son!—And have I wept thy death? And do I again behold thee living?—Ah, how might this aged frame support all that horror of despair, and all this excess of transport? —But what miracle restores thee thus?

ABRA-

ABRAHAM.

Tearing myself from this place, and from thee, Sarah, I led my son to death. Terror, inconceivable, came over me, suspended my soul's faculties, and almost took from me sense and motion!—No more I heard; no, not the voice of Isaac!—Darkness and deep night were around me! The dart of death seemed piercing me to the heart! and, in this mortal agony, I had not the power even to complain! Inwardly I groaned, while cold drops of sweat stood upon my face! My pangs I wished to express by cries and tears; but my parched tongue and suffocated voice could form only sounds confused and unintelligible! Isaac, nevertheless, supported me in his arms, and guided my uncertain steps. At length, we arrived on the mountain-summit. There, suddenly recovering my lost powers, and upward to heaven looking, I imagined I beheld God, himself, ready to judge me, for time and for eternity! fixing his searching and awful eye upon me!—So solemn, so sublime was the idea, that, elevated into something divine, animated by courage supernatural, stedfastly I approached the altar! Isaac fell on his knees; and, upward presenting his palpitating heart,

heart, I seized the sacred knife !——
But lo ! in an instant ! the delivering
Angel appeared !—Aloft ! Suspended in
the clouds !——Forbear ! cried he : For-
bear !——Hear !—Thus saith the Lord !
“ By myself have I sworn for because
“ thou hast done this thing, and hast not
“ with-held thy son, thine only son, that,
“ in blessing I will blefs thee, and in mul-
“ tipling I will multiply thy seed as the
“ stars of heaven, and as the sand upon
“ the sea shore.”

S A R A H.

O God of benevolence !—My son !—
To him shouldest thou dedicate that life
he hath deigned to give, and deigned to
preserve !

I S A A C.

Yes !—I will walk with delight in his
pure and holy law !—He commands to
obey, revere, and love the authors of my
days ; and this divine commandment shall
be engraven on my heart ! My life shall
be devoted to the service of my God ;
and to be a comfort and a delight unto
Abraham and Sarah.

A B R A H A M.

ABRAHAM.

Let us celebrate together this memorable day of trial and of happiness. Let us repair to our assembled friends, and bless with them the mercy and goodness inexhaustible of the God of Abraham.

THE END.

J O S E P H

MADE KNOWN TO HIS

B R E T H R E N.

A SACRED DRAMA,

IN TWO ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JOSEPH, Minister and Favorite of Pharaoh,
King of Egypt, under the name of
Orâsis, and Son of Jacob and Rachel.

BENJAMIN, Second Son of Jacob and
Rachel.

SIMEON, } Brethren of Joseph and Benja-
min, and Sons of Jacob and
REUBEN, } Leah.

Four other Brethren of Joseph, mute.

PHASEAR, the Friend of Joseph:

ZARES, one of the Servants of Joseph.

*The Scene lies at Memphis, in the Palace of
Joseph.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the following drama, I have taken the liberty of introducing the supposed character of Phasear, and the incident which is the consequence of his project of vengeance ; by which supposition a contrast is produced, that renders the character of Joseph more affecting, and conduces to establish those principles which I could not so well unfold without these means. Metastasio has, in his piece, given Joseph his real name, which, at the moment of discovery, appears to me to have a ridiculous effect, when he exclaims, *Giuseppe io sono*, I am Joseph, since he has been Joseph all through the piece.

The scripture does not inform us what name Joseph bore in Egypt ; but we learn that Pharaoh obliged him, on his promotion, to quit his own and take a new one. I have, therefore, called him Orasis, till the moment of making himself known to his brethren.

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J O S E P H

MADE KNOWN TO HIS
B R E T H R E N.

Say not thou I will recompense evil.

PROV. XX. 22.

He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth
life, righteousness and honor.

PROV. XXI. 21.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

A magnificent Hall.

P H A S E A R, Z A R E S.

P H A S E A R.

I WISH, Zares, to speak to thy master
in private.

Z A R E S.

At present his duty detains him with
the king.

P H A -

P H A S E A R.

I will wait.——But tell me, Zares, wherefore refuseth he to see these Hebrew-men, on whom he hath heaped so many benefits?

Z A R E S.

I know not, my Lord: and I am the more surpris'd at it in that he seems deeply interested concerning them. These strangers have given a narrative, in a writing which I have presented him, of the famine which at present devours their land. Orasis was deeply affected: I beheld his tears. He bade me question the Hebrews concerning their father; and his joy was great, when he heard the old man had not hitherto suffered amid the public calamity.——I hear footsteps.——Some one comes.——It is Orasis.

P H A S E A R.

Leave us, Zares.

S C E N E

S C E N E II.

P H A S E A R.

Now will I avenge myself of a perfidious brother. Orafis knows the extent of his ingratitude, and will not refuse to serve me.—That friendship, by which we are united, will make him participate the just resentment with which my bosom burns.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

O R A S I S, P H A S E A R.

P H A S E A R,

My Lord, I have waited for you with impatience.—You now may render me the most important service.

O R A S I S.

Speak, dear Phasear.

P H A S E A R,

(Takes a letter from his pocket.)

You know the writing of Cleophis.—Here read, my Lord.

O R A S I S.

Yes, it is your brother's hand.

P H A-

P H A S E A R.

My brother!—Give not the name of brother to the most ungrateful of men. Cleophis, as you know, my Lord, owes to me his fortune ; nor are you ignorant of the manner in which he has repaid all my benefactions and all my love.—My ruin he hath sought, and every tie, by which we are united, is broken.

O R A S I S,

(After having read the letter.)

This imprudent letter informs me that, seduced by a silly passion, Cleophis is the rival of his master, and dares to adore the object of Pharaoh's affection ; his mistress.—But how came this letter into your hands ?

P H A S E A R.

I bribed the slave who is the confident of this intrigue.

O R A S I S.

O R A S I S.

And what mean you ?

P H A S E A R.

To be revenged.—To inform the king, this very day, he is betrayed.—You only, Orasis, may approach and speak to him at all times.—Give him this letter.

O R A S I S.

Were there a conspiracy against him, did the smallest danger menace the state, or his person, I would fly to inform him, though life were the sacrifice of my loyalty. But wherefore should I deprive him of an illusion which, perhaps, is necessary to his happiness ?

P H A S E A R.

You refuse to serve me then, Orasis ?

O R A S I S.

ORASIS.

Think what you ask.—An act that would debase us both.

PHASEAR.

I ask but what for you I would perform, without hesitation.—Ah, were you in my situation and I in yours——

ORASIS.

Phasear!—Your better understanding passion blinds.——Hurried away by resentment and hatred, you are not yourself, or you would think like me.

PHASEAR.

Can you, whom I have seen so indignant at the procedure of Cleophis, can you oppose my just vengeance?

ORASIS.

Cleophis is an ungrateful man, but he is your brother.—That former friendship,
H that

that intimate confidence, those ties of kindred, all the result of habit and mutual convenience, have you the right to annul them all? Or how may you break the indissoluble ties which nature forms? Cleophis may justly lose the name of friend, but of the title of brother he may never be deprived. It is sacred and indelible.—Though your hearts may be discordant, by how many motives are you still united? Honor and fame are in common between you. If your brother dishonors himself, doth he not dishonor you? If, by rendering your country some glorious and important service, you immortalize your own name, do you not also immortalize your brother's?—In vain would you estrange and separate yourselves: the will of heaven, the laws of nature, the opinions of men, reason, prejudice itself, all drag you towards each other; all invite you to love, or, at least, to serve each other like brethren.

P H A S E A R.

Ah! my Lord, how easy is it for those to condemn resentment who have never felt the envenomed wounds of ingratitude! Had you basely, like me, been betrayed by a brother——

O R A S I S.

Phasear!—Had I been!

P H A-

P H A S E A R.

My Lord!

O R A S I S.

Your brother never yet attempted your life.—And, though he even had been guilty of a crime so horrid, still I should have told you, vengeance were not for you.—He is your brother.

P H A S E A R.

Did you feel my wrongs, my Lord, your thoughts would be different.—However, are you determined to refuse the favour I request?

O R A S I S.

Phafear, by the sacred name of friendship, let me entreat you will not be thus precipitate.—Take time at least to reflect.

P H A S E A R.

Well, my Lord, till to-morrow I will wait, but, should you persist in your refusal, I then will go myself and present this paper to the king.

H 2

O R A -

O R A S I S.

Yourself!——Yourself the accuser of
your brother!

P H A S E A R.

The avenger of my wrongs.

O R A S I S.

Yourself!——Think of the indelible
disgrace.

P H A S E A R.

With which your refusal will brand
me.

O R A S I S.

I?——Were I to act as you require,
would that diminish your guilt?

P H A S E A R.

Let us speak no more on the subject,
my Lord; to-morrow you will inform me
of

of your determination.—I have another favor to ask.—The Hebrew-men, whom your bounty hath assisted, have had recourse to me to obtain a moment's audience.

O R A S I S.

What is their request?

P H A S E A R.

Deeply affected by your benevolence, they wish to express their gratitude to you in person.

O R A S I S.

Let them depart. Let them return to their aged father.—I cannot see them.—And have you, Phasear, spoken to these strangers?

P H A S E A R.

I have, my Lord, and confess that the youth and beauty of the youngest have greatly interested me.

O R A S I S,

(*With agitation.*)

What!——Have they brought the youngest of their brethren!—Know you the name of the boy?

P H A S E A R.

Benjamin.

O R A S I S, (*Afide.*)

What is it I hear!—Is Benjamin with them!——(*Aloud.*) Well, my Lord, in compliance with your request, I will see the youth. Let one of his brethren conduct him hither.

P H A S E A R.

They are all assembled near the palace. I will go myself and bear your answer.

O R A S I S.

When they are departed, I wish to speak to you, Phasear.

P H A -

P H A S E A R.

I will return, my Lord.

O R A S I S.

You will find me here.

S C E N E IV.

O R A S I S.

O thou! my nearest, dearest brother, beloved boy, whom Rachel bore, and whom I never saw but in thy cradle; how may I conceal that strong emotion with which thy presence agitates my bosom!—What, so young, and undertake so long a journey and so painful!—And, great God! unto whose care hast thou been committed?—To the sons of Leah Jacob has entrusted Benjamin.—But, alas! my father knows them not.——Envious and cruel men, who vowed my destruction.——If Benjamin be the beloved of Jacob, if he be dear to his father as Joseph was, I have every thing to fear for his life.——How shall I protect him from the ferocious jealousy

of his inhuman brethren?—Brethren! and are these barbarous men my brethren?—Alas!—How shall I behold, and hide my emotion, from the face of him who is to bring hither Benjamin?—But what would his be, did he know that the Orasis who governs Egypt, Orasis, Minister and Favorite of a mighty Monarch, is that same Joseph whom he sold like a vile slave!—I shudder!—The very recollection makes my blood run cold with horror. The sight of one of these perfidious men more powerfully will retrace to memory that day of hatred, rage and terror, when my brethren became a band of murderers.—Again their tumultuous cries, their menacing and dreadful words resound in my ears. Again I behold them, inspired with mad fury, rejecting remorse, yielding to guilt, surrounding, seizing, and plunging me into the black pit they had chosen for my grave.—From the depth of darkness, I implored the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and my feeble voice was heard, even in heaven. Thou, God of Mercy, wert my Saviour, nor can I better repay thy benefactions than by forgetting the injuries I have received. By triumphing over just resentment, imitating thy clemency, and pardoning guilt, shall I render thee homage most worthy of thee, and best express my gratitude for all thy goodness.—Such are the sacrifices most acceptable

acceptable in thine eyes.—I hear footsteps.—Perhaps 'tis Benjamin!—How shall I smother all the affection I feel?—Yet let me be calm.—That his brother and conductor should know me in my present rank, under this disguise, and after the change of features which age and this burning climate have produced, I need not fear.—They approach.—I tremble.—With how many various sensations at once my soul is seized!—Let me, if possible, dissemble that excessive agitation and affection by which, alone, I can be betrayed.

S C E N E V.

ORASIS, BENJAMIN, SIMEON.

ORASIS,

(Aside, and looking earnestly at Benjamin.)

'Tis he!—'Tis Benjamin! Affecting picture of a beloved mother, how many former ideas, dear to memory, dost thou excite! *(Aloud, and turning towards Simeon.)* Come near.

SIMEON.

Thus at your feet, most puissant and benevolent minister of good, permit us to express our gratitude.

ORASIS,

(Raising him.) .

What is it you do?—You had need of sustenance, and I had the power to serve.-----What have I done more than humanity required?—If pity be not a sensation foreign to your bosom, you will cease to admire an action so natural and so necessary.

SIMEON,

SIMEON, (*Aside.*)

How awful his voice!—His features,
his serious deportment, his sentiments all
inspire respect.

ORASIS.

What is your name?

SIMEON.

Simeon, my Lord.

ORASIS.

And the name of that youth?

SIMEON.

Benjamin.

ORASIS.

Is he your brother?

SIMEON.

S I M E O N.

Jacob is our father, but Rachel his mother, was not my mother.

O R A S I S.

And had Rachel only this son ?

S I M E O N.

Alas !——She had yet another.

O R A S I S.

And how was he called ?

S I M E O N.

Joseph.

O R A S I S.

Is he come with you ?

S I M E O N.

My Lord——

O R A S I S.

O R A S I S.

Why seem you so disturbed?

S I M E O N.

In pity, forbear to interrogate me farther.

O R A S I S.

What, was this son, this Joseph, unworthy of his father?—Was he perfidious and cruel to his brethren?—Deserved he their hatred?

S I M E O N.

He was innocent and virtuous.

O R A S I S.

You weep.

S I M E O N.

My Lord!—You know not how you rend my heart.

O R A S I S,

O R A S I S, (*Afide.*)

His remorse affects me; let me forbear to increase his affliction. (*Aloud.*) Come hither, Benjamin, and speak to me.——Should I desire to detain you awhile in Egypt, would you contented stay with me?

B E N J A M I N.

Alas! my Lord, how might I stay? My father dwelleth in the Land of Canaan.

O R A S I S.

Riches and honors I could easily procure you.

B E N J A M I N.

Riches and honors could not supply the loss of a father, the want of his society, the happiness of comforting his old age.

O R A S I S.

Your feelings are natural and just, and only encrease the desire I have you should

should remain.—Yet, you shall see Jacob again. Suffer your brethren to depart; they will inform him why you art left in Egypt, and, whenever you desire, you shall again revisit the country he inhabits.

S I M E O N.

Ah, my Lord, what is it you propose? Since Jacob hath lost the eldest son of Rachel, Benjamin is become the object of his dearest, tenderest affection. —When to us he confided the beloved youth, he made us swear we would bring him back. If Benjamin be not with us, how shall we dare present ourselves before our father? The relation of your kindness, towards Benjamin, will appear unto him but as a tale; and he will say unto us, it is ye who have robbed me of my child.

O R A S I S.

What you! The brethren of Benjamin!—Would it be possible he could suspect, could accuse you, of a crime so horrible and unnatural?—And wherefore should your father suspect you of barbarity, from which nature would shrink with detestation?—How imagine you so inhumanly blood thirsty, as
to

to conspire together and murder an innocent brother, by whom you are all beloved?—No: such wickedness may not be; nor such suspicion.

S I M E O N, (*Afide.*)

Each word he utters confounds and overwhelms me with shame.

O R A S I S.

Since, however, I see you will not grant me the favor I ask, you shall suffer no constraint. Depart, Benjamin, with your brethren, only remain here some little while in the palace. A banquet is preparing, my friends will soon assemble, and I invite ye all to be my guests. When the duties of hospitality are fulfilled, ye shall be detained no longer: you may then go hence.

S I M E O N.

Gracious Lord, your goodness—

O R A S I S.

Bring hither your brethren.—Go.

S C E N E

S C E N E VI.

O R A S I S.

Jacob prefers Benjamin to the children of Leah. Have I not, therefore, cause to fear Benjamin is envied and hated by his brethren?—Not to restore him to his father did they refuse me. The good I would do him excites their jealousy, and they have conspired against him.—But I will deliver him from their power.—He is my brother, my heart yearns towards him. His piety and filial affection render him still more dear.

—Oh, how sweet are those emotions which nature inspires towards a brother! ——Lovely youth! He alone could supply the loss of me to my father; he has received those benedictions, those paternal caresses of which, by the perfidy of my brethren, I have been deprived.---

O my father, not all the gifts of fortune, wealth, or honor, can make me forget thee.—But, here, established, in a strange land, by ties the most sacred, Minister of a Sovereign, who is my benefactor, ought I to abandon Egypt, the government

ment of which he has confided to my cares? Ought I to quit the wife whom he, or the children whom heaven, hath given me? Neither could I return to Canaan without publishing the crime of my brethren, without bearing inquietude, disorder, and grief, into the bosom of my family.—I hear the voice of Phasear, let me proceed to execute the design I have formed.

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

ORASIS, PHASEAR.

O R A S I S.

Come hither, dear Phafear, I have need of thy friendship.

P H A S E A R.

According to your will, dispose of me, my Lord.

O R A S I S.

May I depend on secresy inviolable?

P H A S E A R.

Doth Orasis doubt my faith?

O R A S I S.

Time is precious; hear me, Phafear.
——The Hebrews, with whom I have spoken,

spoken, will presently return with their burthen. Before they depart, I mean to give them a splendid banquet, here in this palace. I intend not to be present, but you shall supply my place. I will command my cup of gold to be placed before the youth, Benjamin; and, when they depart, let the cup be secretly put into the mouth of the sack that belongeth to Benjamin. This only was the request I had to make.

P H A S E A R.

How, my Lord!—Secretly conceal the cup in his sack!—I understand you not.—Do you mean it as a gift?

O R A S I S.

Far from it.—When you conceal it, be careful not to be seen.

P H A S E A R.

And what is your intent?

O R A S I S.

E'er they arrive at the gates of Memphis, they shall be arrested by my order,
and

and my cup demanded; which being found, in the sack of Benjamin, they shall be re-conducted to the palace like criminals, disgraced by the meanest of actions.

P H A S E A R.

Heavens! What is it I hear!

O R A S I S.

I see I yet shall augment your surprise. Learn then my whole secret.—These strangers, for whom you are so much interested—are my brethren.

P H A S E A R.

Your brethren!

O R A S I S.

Yes, but brethren most inhuman, most perfidious; who together concurred, and plotted to take away my life. Neither my youth, my innocence, nor my prayers, could move their compassion. They condemned me to the most lingering, the most dreadful of deaths, cast me into a deep

deep pit, and there enclosed me, living, in a horrible grave. Pity, remorse, the compunctions of nature, they were deaf to; their covetousness only saved my life. Ishmaelite merchants happened to pass by, to whom my assassins agreed to sell me. Drawn from the gulph into which hatred had plunged me, I was sent a slave, among strangers, here into Egypt.

P H A S E A R.

The tale makes me shudder.—Yes, it was atrocious, unheard of guilt.—Yet, my Lord, these men are your brethren: by heaping ignominy on them, by delivering them over to the rigor of the law, remember your innocence will be stained by their crimes.

O R A S I S.

Were vengeance what I sought I might enjoy it, yet not participate their dishonor. They, themselves, recollect me not, nor doth any one here know they are my brethren.

P H A S E A R.

But you, my Lord, know them to be such.

O R A -

O R A S I S.

Phasear!—And is it you who speak thus? You, whose breast burns with the desire of your brother's destruction?—You, who so earnestly have conjured me to aid your vengeful project.

P H A S E A R.

My Lord!—But think how fearfully criminal is the action you require from me.

O R A S I S.

And have you not required me to accuse a man who never was my enemy? Were I to shew Pharoah the letter which you have obtained, the punishment of Cleophis would be inevitable.

P H A S E A R.

At least I have not employed deceit to obtain his punishment.

O R A S I S.

Yes, you have had recourse to artifice
and

and treason, by seducing the slave from whom you obtained the letter. And can you compare your situation to mine? Cleophis has forgotten to be grateful, has betrayed the duties of friendship; but has he sought your death? Has he attempted to bereave you of life or liberty?—If your resentment be so violent, what must mine be?—Though I would accuse my persecutors and assassins of an imaginary crime, is not their real guilt infinitely more abominable than their imputed?

P H A S E A R.

But the youngest of them! Surely you cannot hate that sweet, that innocent youth? He had no part in the wickedness of his unhappy brethren.

O R A S I S.

Hate him! Hate Benjamin!—Oh, no, you know not how dear he is to my heart.

P H A S E A R.

By what unaccountable caprice, then, do you wish the cup to be concealed in his sack?

O R A S I S.

O R A S I S.

This evening you shall know. Be not anxious for his safety ; that he has nothing to fear, let my most sacred promise be the pledge.

P H A S E A R.

I think I understand you. You would accuse the Hebrews of the double baseness of stealing the cup, and seeking to cast the guilt on Benjamin, who may entertain some suspicions of his brethren, and thus partake your hatred, and abandon them without regret.

O R A S I S.

Be that as it may : do you consent to the request I have made ?

P H A S E A R.

These wretched men have implored my protection, and may I enter into a plot to do them evil ? Not long since, you, Orasis, exhorted me to forget offences : would it not be an act worthy of you, to set me this noble example ?

I

O R A S I S.

O R A S I S.

Would you follow it?

P H A S E A R,

(After a moment's consideration.)

Wherefore hesitate? Never was repentment better founded than yours. Your brethren are monsters unworthy to behold the light of day.——And yet—I hope, in the moment of vengeance, you will listen to the voice of nature and humanity, pleading for mercy.——You do not desire their death.

O R A S I S.

Certainly not.

P H A S E A R.

Swear to me their lives shall be safe.

O R A S I S.

Willingly.

P H A-

P H A S E A R.

Whatever other punishment you mean to inflict, it cannot be too severe for the crime of which they are guilty.—You see, Orasis, my friendship for you hath vanquished my scruples ; and now I have a right to exact from you the convincing proof, I ask, of an attachment equal to that of which you find me capable.

O R A S I S.

I understand you—Give me the letter of Cleophis—your brother.

P H A S E A R.

Here it is.—You promise to give it to the king.

O R A S I S.

Yes, to-morrow morning, if you then should continue in your present disposition.

P H A S E A R.

Thus, into your hands, I give my means
I 2 of

of vengeance, and undertake to see yours executed.

O R A S I S.

Let us lose no time: I must give the necessary orders for the execution of my design. Go you to Benjamin and his brethren, and be it your office to receive and entertain them.

P H A S E A R.

Depend on my care, and forget not your promises.

SCENE

S C E N E V I I I.

O R A S I S.

Into what fatal excesses are we hurried by our passions!—How is Phasear borne away by their impetuous power, even while his reason detests their influence, and shrinks with horror from the same effect in others.—O Thou who knowest my heart, Jehovah, God of my fathers, deign to aid my attempt, deign to preserve Benjamin from the dangers which threaten him, those dreadful dangers from which thy arm delivered me.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

P H A S E A R.

It is done.—I have fulfilled my guilty promise.—But who shall stifle the remorse I feel?—These miserable men, with hearts overflowing with gratitude, now, on quitting the palace, prayers and blessings have bestowed on Orasis; the cruel Orasis, who only hath heaped benefits upon them to make their ignominy the greater.—This favorite of heaven, this deliverer of Egypt, this Orasis, so famous for his genius and his aggrandizement, how have I been deceived in him! —I admired, I loved him; but now I feel he hath lost all place in my heart.—How could he suppose himself indebted to friendship for the unworthy service I have just performed?—No.—I have become his accomplice, but have ceased to be his friend.—Yet, what have I to reproach him with?—The desire of vengeance: a passion by which I myself am consumed!—Yet, whatever he may pretend, I than ~~be~~ have stronger cause for hatred. Though his brethren have committed an act most culpable, it was
but

But during the fatal moment of delirious fury ; and, far from being their victim, to this fury Orasis owes his elevation and his happiness. While I, by a brother, who to me is indebted for all his fortune, basely am betrayed. In him have I found an ambitious rival, whose only endeavor it hath been, for years, to render all my hopes abortive ; and who, adding insolence to ingratitude, audaciously braves me, fearing neither my hatred nor my resentment.—And can I buy the pleasure of humbling and confounding this brother too dear?—Oh, no.—To-morrow, vengeance shall be satiated.—Orasis comes. Let me hide the involuntary agitations I feel.

S C E N E II.

PHASEAR, ORASIS.

O R A S I S.

I fought you, Phasear, to inform you of the success of our artifice. Zares hath just brought me intelligence of the loss of the cup, and instant orders are dispatched to follow and seize on Benjamin and his brethren.—They will presently be here.

P H A S E A R.

Ah! my Lord—what do you mean to do?

O R A S I S.

I have already told you.

P H A S E A R.

But what punishment do you mean to inflict?

O R A S I S.

O R A S I S.

You shall know before we part.—
But wherefore do you seem so much disturbed?

P H A S E A R.

In vain would I dissemble.—Spite
of myself, my heart reproaches me for
having thus abetted your revenge.

O R A S I S.

And am not I to abet yours also?—If
you still desire the punishment of Cleo-
phis, from me, at least, hide your re-
morse.

P H A S E A R, (*Afide.*)

Ah, the recollection restores me to my-
self. (*Aloud.*) Yes, we will be revenged.
All means are lawful to punish the perfi-
dious and confound the guilty. Where-
fore should we then feel remorse?—The
innocent we oppress not. The wicked to
oppose is to imitate heaven; and become
the formidable instrument of justice.—
No; your brethren I no longer can con-
sider but as base assassins. Death is their
desert; yet you will suffer them to live.

And can I pity them; or ought I to condemn you?—To me Cleophis is indebted for all his wealth, all his prosperity. To me he hath returned ingratitude and deceit. And have I not the right to take that from him which I gave; since he only uses it to injure me and counteract my views?

O R A S I S.

Some one comes.—'Tis Zares; no doubt he has secured Benjamin.

P H A S E A R, (*Afide.*)

Fearful moment!—How may I sustain the presence of the man I have betrayed!

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

PHASEAR, ORASIS, ZARES.

ORASIS.

Well, Zares?

ZARES.

My Lord, I have found the cup.

ORASIS.

In whose possession?

ZARES.

The youngest of these base Hebrews. Yet his surprise and grief were so great that I scarcely could believe him guilty. The crime, no doubt, was committed by his brethren; and, perhaps, without his knowledge.

ORASIS.

Did they deny the theft?

ZARES.

Z A R E S.

They appeared confounded, annihilated : spoke of remorse, divine justice ; but only in half sentences, interrupted by sighs, groans and tears.

P H A S E A R, (*Afide.*)

What have I done !

O R A S I S.

Where are they ?

Z A R E S.

At the palace gates, under the guard of your slaves.

O R A S I S.

Go, find, bring them before me——all of them.

S C E N E

S C E N E IV.

ORASIS, PHASEAR.

O R A S I S.

Whither runnest thou, Phasear?

P H A S E A R.

Let me fly; let me quit this place.

O R A S I S.

No.—Stay.

P H A S E A R.

I cannot.—How can I, face to face, behold these men?—Ah, if your heart were not inaccessible to pity, you would, at least, conceive what are my present feelings!

O R A S I S.

Pity!—And what then is thy heart?—Thou weepest the misfortune of strangers, of assassins, yet askest the destruction of a brother!

P H A S E A R.

P H A S E A R.

I own, I confess it. The cruel reproach is but too well founded. But, be it virtue or be it weakness, compassion stirs up remorse, which I in vain would overcome, in vain would conceal.

O R A S I S.

I hear the voice of Benjamin.—Pha-
 fear, go not hence, I must exact this proof
 of your friendship.

P H A S E A R, (*Afide.*)

Yes, I will stay; but it shall be to protect these wretched men and, if it be necessary, even by sacrificing my own revenge.

S C E N E

TO HIS BRETHREN. 193

S C E N E V.

ORASIS, PHASEAR, ZARES, SIMEON,
REUBEN, BENJAMIN, with all
the Brethren of JOSEPH.

ZARES.

Behold the criminals, my Lord.

ORASIS.

Leave us.

S C E N E VI.

All the former Characters, except ZARES.

ORASIS,

(Turning towards his brethren.)

Wretched strangers, whom my bounty
too easily admitted here! Wherefore have
you violated the sacred ties of hospitali-
ty? You, no doubt, are the accomplices
of your younger brother. I might de-
prive you all of the happiness of ever
returning

returning to your country ; but I will detain him, only, whose guilt cannot be doubted. Benjamin must remain in Egypt. As for you, depart : you are at liberty.

PHASEAR, (*Aside.*)

Ah !—I breathe again.

SIMEON.

No, my Lord, Benjamin is not guilty. Punish us, whom the wrath of Heaven pursues.—Oh ! restore Benjamin to his country and his father, and let all your indignation be on our heads !

REUBEN.

Only let Benjamin be free and we will accept slavery, as a just judgment, which we have but too well merited.

BENJAMIN.

What is it you say, my brethren !—Would you justify me, by accusing yourselves ? Shall I be thought innocent by your making yourselves seem guilty ?—Or shall I see you sacrificed to my safety ?—No ; I will partake your misfortunes.

ORASIS.

O R A S I S.

What! Simeon, Reuben, do you confess yourselves criminal?

O M N E S.

(That is to say, all the brethren of Joseph, except Benjamin, suddenly exclaim—)

All! All!

S I M E O N.

Benjamin is innocent.

B E N J A M I N.

O my brethren!

S I M E O N.

Yes, my Lord, from me you hear the truth. Overwhelmed with remorse, long have we dragged a deplorable life.—A moment of mad and guilty error has for ever deprived us of innocence, happiness, and peace. Pursued by remorse, most fearful,

ful, a most injured, most dreadful spectre haunts us incessantly. Fears, omens, and hov'ring evils add ten thousand imaginary torments to our real woes!—Nay, strange to thought! you, my Lord, your presence, the sight of you, alone, first struck and still strikes our hearts with trouble and terror!—Your features, the very sound of your voice, recall to mind the object and the cause of all our guilty fears.—Yes, my Lord, you hath heaven chosen to punish the crime which repentance, however sincere, however bitter, never can expiate!—Oh, that by offering ourselves the victims of divine justice, that heaven might but, in mercy, restore a moment's tranquillity to our bosoms!—Dispose of us, therefore, as you please, be it slavery or death; but oh cast an eye of compassion on this child, on Benjamin! Oh, consider and spare his youth, his innocence! He, alone, among us all, is worthy to console a virtuous father. Oh suffer him to live, that he may dry up his tears, and tell him, the wretched children of Leah have sacrificed themselves to preserve the last of the sons of Rachel!

P H A S E A R.

Oh! generous Orasis, what sentence mean you to pronounce?

O R A S I S,

O R A S I S,

(Turning towards his brethren.)

This is too much!—And is your repentance, then, your remorse so great, so sincere? Happy that I am!—Again you are my brethren.—I!—I am Joseph!—I am your brother!

O M N E S,

(Drawing back with terror and surprise.)

Joseph!—God of our fathers!

P H A S E A R.

Again he is my friend.

J O S E P H,

(To his Brethren.)

Cast away your fears, they wrong me.

O M N E S,

(Throwing themselves at the feet of Joseph.)

Oh, my Lord!

J O S E P H,

JOSEPH,

(Raising them.)

Every thing is forgotten.—I am your brother, and my heart is yours!—Yes, I am your brother! *(They fall upon his neck and weep.)*

P H A S E A R.

Affecting moment!

JOSEPH.

And thou, dear Benjamin, child of a beloved mother. Ah! how sweet it is to hold thee thus; to call thee brother! Oh speak! tell me, in this happy moment, what thy thoughts, what thy sensations are!

B E N J A M I N.

Alas! my brother, though I knew you not, how often have I wept your death, how often partook the sorrows of my father!—Imagine then how great is my joy, how vast my happiness, to find myself thus in the arms of Joseph!

JOSEPH.

JOSEPH.

Praised be the God of Jacob, who hath wrought these things!—Never, my brethren, was I so vile as to have a thought to harm you. Benjamin only did I wish to retain, and therefore was this stratagem contrived. But I have read your hearts, have seen your grief, and my fears are dispelled. Depart then to our father, take Benjamin with you, and restore him to the arms of Jacob. To the benefits you have received from the Minister of Pharaoh, I will add the gifts of a brother, a brother whose heart is divided among you.—Say to my father that duties, the most sacred, detain me in Egypt; but that I cannot enjoy my fortune, without partaking it with him and with my brethren. Pray him to come, him and his family. Refuse me, sure, he will not. Then shall I, though deprived the sweet pleasure of revisiting the land of my nativity, then, when my father and my brethren are at Memphis, again I shall have found my country.

SIMEON.

Behold our tears, my Lord, let them speak for us!—It is not for our tongues to express the feelings of our hearts!—Joseph dares confide Benjamin to our protection.—

tection.—O, my Lord, least those inquietudes, which, by the nobleness of your own mind, are at present dissipated, should again revive before our return, permit me to remain at Memphis; let Simeon be the pledge.

J O S E P H.

No, Simeon. No, my brother. Suspicion towards you is for ever banished this bosom.

S I M E O N.

Nay, my Lord, but I will not leave you.—Your tranquillity is now become dear to me.

J O S E P H.

Well, my brother, be it as thou wilt, and be thou master here, Simeon. Be this the house of thy father: so consider, so use it.—But go, my brethren; wait a moment under the portico: I will presently be with you. The stratagem I used, and your innocence, must be publicly proclaimed; then will I give orders for your safe conduct, and receive your farewell.

S C E N E

S C E N E VII, And Last.

J O S E P H, P H A S E A R.

P H A S E A R.

At length we are alone.—Noble and generous friend!—Thinkest thou that Phasear only would admire thy virtues? Give me back that fatal letter.

J O S E P H,

-(Returning the letter.)

Phasear, when I accepted this paper, be certain I knew thou wouldst ask me to return it.

P H A S E A R.

Henceforth be hatred and vengeance, those dreadful sensations, those insensate passions of feeble and cruel minds, banished my breast. *(He destroys the letter.)* Thou hast informed, thou hast taught me to feel the whole extent of the sacred rites of nature, the happiness and the glory of knowing to pardon.—Yes, on that solemn day, when Pharaoh, in the midst of the mighty and the wise, fought, received, and proclaimed thee the tutelary genius of his empire—

202 JOSEPH MADE KNOWN, &c.

empire—then, glorious as was that day to thee, thou appearedst less great, less happy than but now, when I beheld thee weeping with thy brethren!

J O S E P H.

Phasear—Let me behold thee all I wish. Promise me to see, forgive, and love thy brother.

P H A S E A R.

With transport!—Go to Benjamin, who waits to see you; when you have received his last farewell I will attend you to the house of Cleophas.

J O S E P H.

Phasear!—My friend!

P H A S E A R.

Come, let us not delay.

T H E E N D.

R U T H
A N D
N A O M I,

A SACRED DRAMA,
IN TWO ACTS.

K DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

NAOMI, Widow of Elimelech.

RUTH, a Moabitess, Daughter-in-Law of Naomi, and Widow of Mahallon.

BOAZ, Son of Salmon, near Kinsman of Naomi.

JEPHONAH, Servant of Boaz, and Overseer of the Reapers.

REAPERS and GLEANERS.

DEDICATION TO PAMELA.

WHEN I read you the story of Ruth, you were particularly struck, Pamela, where she says to Naomi, *Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.* You requested me to write a drama on this subject and dedicate it to you. Therefore, my dear, this piece, of right, belongs to you : nor can any person whatever better decide, whether I have truly and naturally described the gratitude and attachment which the cares and tenderness of an adopted mother ought necessarily to inspire. If you find Ruth, when she speaks to Naomi, expresses herself as you feel, I shall be satisfied with my work.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE interesting story of Ruth and Naomi has furnished Thomson with the happiest episode to be found in his poem of the Seasons; but he has taken only the chief incidents, and has changed the names* in the scripture.

The story of Ruth is divided into four chapters, and is a masterly effusion of feeling and simplicity, and a precious monument of ancient manners. But those manners are no longer our manners; and a dramatic work, in which they should be faithfully preserved, would please still less, at present, than one which should portray the manners of the ancient Gauls.

I have exactly followed the story of Ruth, and taken advantage in the denouement of a circumstance which Thomson could not in his episode; because he has not laid the scene in Judea, and because it is peculiar to the laws of the Israelites. I have not meant to imitate the style, though I have literally copied the conversation between Ruth and Naomi, when the former forsakes her country to go with her mother-in-law. This conversation is in the second scene of the second act; and, it appears to me that, this short quotation

* This Episode is to be found in his Autumn, and begins,

“ The lovely young Lavinia once had friends.”

is not at all dissimilar to the style of the rest of the piece, and that it cannot be distinguished in any manner from the colloquies which precede or which follow. The speech I have given to Naomi, when she blesses Ruth, is not, I own, so simple in its diction; but Naomi is inspired at that moment; and, therefore, should necessarily express herself with more sublimity than at any other.

The following is an extract of the history of Ruth.

Naomi had a husband, named Elimelech. There was a famine in Israel, which obliged Naomi and her husband to depart from Bethlehem, and they and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, went into the country of the Moabites, where the two sons were married. Orpah, the wife of Chilion, and Ruth, the wife of Mahlon, were both Moabites; and Naomi lived ten years in that foreign land. Here she lost her husband, and her two sons; after which she determined to return to Bethlehem. Having begun her journey, in which her two daughters-in-law accompanied her, she exhorted them to return back into their own country. She kissed them; they wept, and said, *Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.* Naomi would not consent, and answered, *Turn again, my daughters, for it grieveth me much, for your sakes, that the hand of the*
Lord

Lord is gone out against me ; and they lifted up their voice and wept again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and went back ; but Ruth clave unto Naomi, and would not forsake her. Her answer was: Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God ; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also if aught but death part thee and me.

Ruth and Naomi then departed together, and went and dwelt at Bethlehem. Ruth, there, was a gleaner in the field of Boaz, her kinsman, who praised her for her attachment to her mother-in-law. He gave express orders that ears of corn should be scattered purposely for her, and made her dine with his reapers ; and she took the greatest portion of the meat, given her, home to her mother-in-law. Naomi advised Ruth to anoint herself, put on her best raiment, and go to Boaz to engage him to espouse her, he being her nearest kinsman. Ruth obeyed her mother-in-law, and Boaz answering, said, it was true he was the kinsman of Elimelech, but that there was another nearer relation living. Boaz then took with him ten of the elders of the place, and went with them to the gate of the city, where he summoned the nearest kinsman before the judges. This kinsman ceded to Boaz the right he had to espouse Ruth ; and, as the manner was,

that the agreement might be valid, the kinsman took off his shoe and gave it to Boaz. After this ceremony Boaz espoused Ruth, who would not forsake Naomi; and Ruth bore a son, whom Naomi educated. This child was called Obed, and was the father of Jesse; and Jesse was the father of David; therefore, this Obed was, humanly speaking, one of the progenitors of Jesus Christ.

The holy scriptures do not mention the age of Boaz; but circumstances lead us to suppose that Ruth was in the prime of youth, and Boaz middle aged; and so have I represented them in the following drama. I have suppressed various circumstances, which could only be agreeable when related at length, in the original. Thus, for example, when Naomi returns to Bethlehem, she says, call me no longer Naomi, which signifies beautiful, but Mara, that is to say, bitter, *for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me*. This phrase might have its effect in a language the proper names of which, most generally, are expressive either of virtues, sensations, or personal qualities. The French language does not furnish a single example of this kind, worthy the sentimental or sublime. Those French proper names which have a characteristic signification, are generally burlesque and vulgar; such as *M. Fierenfat*, *M. Passépied*, *M. Toutabas*,
M. Chi-

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*M. Chicaneau, &c.** It were much to be wished, that our imitators and translators were somewhat more attentive to the genius of their language; and that they felt, as they ought, that, by literal translations, they deform their original, without conveying either the spirit or the meaning.

* Proud-fool; Walk-a-foot; Down-in-the-mouth; Petty-fogger.

R U T H
A N D
N A O M I.

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest ; thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger.

LEVIT. xxiii. 22.

When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it : it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow ; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.

DEUT. xxiv. 19.

A C T I.
S C E N E I.

JEPHONAH, *numerous REAPERS and GLEANERS, labouring in the field of Boaz.*

J E P H O N A H,

(To the reapers.)

WORK away, work away, my
brave fellows ; this is the time
of day when Boaz, our generous master,
comes

comes into the field. He will presently be here. Let us shew him we have not been idle.—Well said, well said. Tie up those sheaves, Baruch. Go you, Hanan, Zadock and Hariph, and help to load.—Why are you idle, Elam? Did not I bid you follow the gleaners, and watch that they do no mischief?—Run, run; I'll follow thee presently. Do thou, Josabad, prepare bands for the sheaves, and do it quickly.—Oh! the days when I served Salmon, the father of my good master!—Ah! why are they fled?—But did not I hear the voice of Boaz?—Yes, 'tis he himself.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

JEPHONAH, BOAZ: *At a distance, walking slowly, and carefully examining the countenances of all the young female reapers.*

J E P H O N A H.

He does not see me.——He should be in search of something, by his manner.——Of me perhaps.——(*Goes towards Boaz.*)

B O A Z.

Jephonah!

J E P H O N A H.

Here I am.

B O A Z,

(*With an air of absence in his countenance.*)

She is not here?

J E P H O-

J E P H O N A H.

Who is not here ?

B O A Z.

I was not speaking of thee.

J E P H O N A H.

Did not you call me ? (*Going.*)

B O A Z, (*Stops him.*)

Tell me——

J E P H O N A H.

What ?

B O A Z.

Jephonah——knowest thou the name
of all the young female gleaners who usu-
ally come into this field ?

J E P H O

J E P H O N A H.

I believe I do, partly——Yonder they are. Shall I name them to you one by one?

B O A Z.

They are not all here to-day who usually come.——For several days past, morning and evening, I have remarked——(*Pause.*)

J E P H O N A H.

Remarked what, my master?——
(*Pause.*)

B O A Z.

Jephonah——Dost thou know the name of the young damsel to whom I spoke yesterday?

J E P H O N A H.

I did not see whom you spoke to. What kind of a damsel was it?

B O A Z.

B O A Z.

A most beauteous——her looks so modest, such candor, simplicity, and truth, in her countenance.

J E P H O N A H.

This must be Ruth, the Moabitess.

B O A Z.

The Moabitess?

J E P H O N A H.

Yes, who came not long since to Bethlehem.

B O A Z.

She gleanes, I hear, to support her mother.——Hark thee, Jephonah: should she return, when thou seest her, scatter ears of corn in the furrow where she gleanes.——~~But do it so that she perceive thee not:~~

J E P H O-

JEPHONAH.

Yes, yes; I understand—Like as you have ordered me to do for the poor old men, who come gleaning here.—O my master, it is but just your fields should fructify. Yes, the heavens shall ever bedew and bless them, for there the poor always find subsistence.

BOAZ.

In this I but obey the commandment of the God of Israel—When Jehovah created man, after his own image, he gave him a compassionate heart, and, that he might be happy, ordained him to yield to emotions so satisfactory and pleasing. His holy law bids us be piteous, and, that we may be so, he hath made pity inherent in our hearts.—But look thee, Jephonah, yonder, on that brow.—See'st thou the young woman that descends the hill?

JEPHONAH.

Yes; it is Ruth, of whom we were speaking.—Know you her not?

BOAZ.

B O A Z.

I must question her, concerning her family, and present circumstances.

J E P H O N A H.

The reapers are going into the other field, and Ruth is coming here to glean. Shall I call her ?

B O A Z.

Yes, run, bring her hither ; tell her—I ask a moment's conversation—and, while I speak to her, scatter thou the wheat there where she is to glean. Nay, thou mayest even unbind a sheaf, and lay it in handfuls where she is to pass.—Perhaps, though, she will not have strength to carry it home ; that and her basket.—What thinkest thou ?

J E P H O N A H.

O yes, yes ; her basket is light and small ; she will carry it.

B O A Z.

B O A Z.

If thou findest an opportunity to help her——

J E P H O N A H.

Yes, yes ; leave all that to me——I'll take care. (*Jephonah is going, and Boaz calls.*)

B O A Z.

Jephonah——Be sure thou dost not forget to call her to dinner with the reapers.

J E P H O N A H.

Nay, but is not there a dinner every day for the gleaners ?

B O A Z.

Do as I bid thee.——Go, send her hither.

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

B O A Z.

So young, so beauteous, and so innocent ! To protect, to succour and console her is but to fulfil a duty—And yet—I feel not that pure sweet satisfaction which actions like this so often have given.—I scarcely know how to interpret my own heart.—For sometime past, the image of this young woman hath been, continually, present to my imagination.—Nothing can remove it thence.—She advances, but dares not approach too near.—I feel timid at seeing her timidity.—How may I inspire confidence when I myself have it not ?

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

BOAZ, JEPHONAH, RUTH.

JEPHONAH.

Nay, nay, but^s come, I tell you.—
Why should you tremble so?—Have
not I told you what a good man he is?—
There he stands. Go, go; he is waiting
for you.—I'll leave you together. (*Aside.*)
Now will I go scatter the corn and untie
the sheaf.

S C E N E

S C E N E V.

B O A Z, R U T H.

B O A Z, (*Afide.*)

Still more charming is she by this modest confusion.

R U T H, (*Afide.*)

What would he?

B O A Z.

Come near Ruth.—Nay, come nearer, and answer me without mistrust or fear.

R U T H.

Mistrust!——I never knew what it was.
——And might you, my Lord, inspire
your handmaid with distrust!——Yet—
I—I am agitated.

B O A Z.

B O A Z.

And wherefore?

R U T H.

I know not.

B O A Z.

Since the day I first saw you—Ever since that day I feel myself interested in your behalf.

R U T H.

I also well recollect that day.—It was near the fountain of Sirea.

B O A Z.

Thither you had been with your mother; with one arm you supported her, and under the other bore a vessel of water.—I offered to carry it for you—but you refused me.

R U T H.

R U T H.

And, so much was I confounded, I wanted recollection even to thank you. —How often after did I blame and repent my silly perplexity! —But, be assured, it was not the crime of ingratitude.

B O A Z, (*Afide.*)

How sweet her voice! How eloquent her words! Her looks how enchanting! —(*Aloud*)—Tell me, Ruth, intendest thou to dwell at Bethlehem?

R U T H.

Yes, my Lord: it is the country of my mother, and is become mine.

B O A Z.

Happy woman that she is! —Most happy in her daughter! And what is your employment, what the manner of your life?

R U T H.

R U T H.

During the day I glean ; in the evening we spin ; and often late at night, I especially : for, when my mother is asleep and our work is wanted, I softly rise, relight the lamp, and sometimes work till day-break.

B O A Z.

Young and tender as thou art, how mayest thou support so much fatigue ?

R U T H.

While I spin, I behold my mother, sleeping, remember it is for her I labor, how earnestly she will bless me when she wakes, and night softly, sweetly, steals away.

B O A Z.

What pleasure I take in list'ning to thee !

L

R U T H.

R U T H.

Can a tale so simple, so unadorned,
affect my Lord? It is not worth your
hearing; but you command, and it is my
duty to obey.

B O A Z.

The God of Israel is just, and of him
Ruth may expect a blessing. He will
not let innocence and virtue, so rare, go
unrewarded.

R U T H.

For my mother all my prayers are
offered.

B O A Z.

There is another gift—a husband—a
man worthy to ascertain your happiness
and his own.

R U T H.

This high bounty Heaven hath already
deigned to grant, but—

B O A Z.

B O A Z.

What do I hear! Are you then married?

R U T H.

Alas! my Lord, I am a widow.

B O A Z.

A widow, and so young!

R U T H.

I am in my eighteenth year: fifteen
I was when Mahlon espoused me, and in
less than eighteen months I lost my hus-
band.

B O A Z.

Alas! life well might he regret.—What
affection must he feel for a wife so virtu-
ous and lovely!—Farewel, Ruth, come
into my fields to glean, let me intreat you
will grant me this preference; I ask it as a
favor—Farewel—--(*Aside*) Let me retire,
and hide inquietude which I can neither
dissemble nor conceive.

L 2

S C E N E

S C E N E VI.

RUTH, (*Looking after Boaz, remains sometime lost in thought.*)

For a moment he was deceived, and thought my husband living.—With what emotion he exclaimed, *Are you then married?*—And wherefore?—Why emotion?—His trembling voice, his manner, his looks inspired strange sensations!—Perhaps he was surprized to find me a widow, and so young—(*Going.*)—Yes, it was but astonishment—Nothing more.—I must to work.—How hot the day. I feel myself already weary. I tremble, and scarcely can stand.—I must rest a little.—This tremor will presently be gone.—(*She sits down, and becomes lost in thought. After being silent some time.*)—I must inform my mother of these matters: guided by her advice I cannot err.—But how shall I convey an idea of the tone of voice, the look, the whole manner by which I was so much affected?—And afterwards, when I said I was a widow, how suddenly did his countenance change!—Yes, most certain,—joy brightened in his eyes.—Ah! had my mother but seen him she then might have told me what to think, might have directed me how to act.—I know not if I have the courage to relate all this to Naomi.—It is a weak dream.—No, I must not

not speak of it.—My heart is oppressed.
—I am fatigued—fatigued to death.—
How ardent are the sun-beams. (*She falls
into a profound reverie.*)

S C E N E VII.

RUTH, JEPHONAH.

JEPHONAH.

What, sat down!—Not at work!—She
has not even gathered up the ears of corn I
scattered expressly for her—(*Jephonah goes
up to Ruth*)—How now, Ruth, what art
thou dreaming about?—Nay, nay, but, if
thou art not industrious, my master will
protect thee no longer.

RUTH, (*Hastily rising.*)

I am indeed to blame.

JEPHONAH.

I expected to have found thee at work.

RUTH.

I will go directly.

JEPHONAH.

Boaz has ordered me never to suffer idle folks in his fields.

RUTH.

Nay, do not send me hence.—I had forgot myself. I am—alas!—unhappy—

JEPHONAH.

Well, well, don't be uneasy, only go to work again and regain your lost time. (*Ruth, with a sorrowful air, begins again to glean. Jephonah stands looking at her.*) —How winning and mild are her looks! —There is no resisting them.

RUTH.

How thick the corn is scattered!—It is not possible the reapers can have left all I see.—And here—here is a whole sheaf!— (*Ruth approaches Jephonah.*) I dare not take all I find,

JEPHONAH.

Nay, nay, take it I tell you.—I give you leave.

RUTH.

RUTH.

But pray look there.—You did not know, perhaps, how the ground is strewed, how thick it lies in the furrows.

JEPHONAH, (*Smiling.*)

No, to be sure.—Go, go, glean there, where it is thickest. Take it all. Do not I give you leave?

Pardon me—but—that is not enough—unless Boaz—

JEPHONAH.

What silly scruples!—Go, go, I tell you; do as you are bid. I act only as I am commanded by my master.

RUTH.

By Boaz!

JEPHONAH.

To be sure.

RUTH.

Ah ! then will I gather it with pleasure.

JEPHONAH.

And hark thee, Ruth ; when thou hast done gleaning, as thy house is but just by, go thou and carry home thy corn, and then come back. Thou shalt dine *with our own bread, and thou shalt go to some distance and returns.*)——But do not forget to carry home the sheaf.——Dost thou hear ?

RUTH.

The sheaf !—The whole sheaf !

JEPHONAH.

Why, yes.

RUTH.

Is that by the orders of Boaz too ?

JEPHONAH.

JEPHONAH.

I declare, I never saw a young woman
so curious.

RUTH.

Nay, pray answer me, or I will not
presume to take away the sheaf.

JEPHONAH, (*Vexed.*)

What, do you suppose, then, I rob
my master to give it you, young woman?

RUTH.

Pray be not angry.—I am satisfied.

JEPHONAH.

Well, well, make haste; and be here
again in half an hour, at farthest.

S C E N E V I I I .

R U T H ,

(After she has gleaned the corn.)

Oh, Boaz, it is thy beneficent hand that thus plenteously bestows !——Not to chance, but thee, am I indebted.—How happy will my mother be, when she sees all I have gleaned ; when she beholds this large sheaf, how will she bless the bounty of Boaz !—And ah ! how happy shall I be to hear her !—Of him shall we speak all the evening ; and, ere we lay down to rest, for him shall our prayers be offered up.—The prayers of Naomi will be heard, fervent and affecting as they are——And, when she shall pronounce the name of Boaz, shall I remain unmoved ?——Ah ! no ; insensible were I and ungrateful then.—Boaz is my benefactor, the comforter of my mother's declining years, for all I gather is for her.—Yes, Boaz is our benefactor.—Ah ! how sweet is that to memory !——But, lo ! yonder my mother comes.—Let me meet her.

S C E N E IX.

RUTH, NAOMI.

RUTH.

Ah! my mother, I was coming to seek you.—Look!—Look what I have gleaned. Behold that sheaf, and see how full my apron is.—All, all this is for you, my mother.

NAOMI.

Is it possible!

RUTH.

He commanded them to scatter, thus abundantly, the ears of corn before me. He desires I should every day glean in his fields.—I have seen him—Spoken to him.—His mildness, his benevolence—Ah! did you know all he hath said to me.

NAOMI.

Of whom speakest thou; of Boaz?

RUTH.

Of whom else could I speak thus?

NAOMI.

N A O M I.

O my daughter, I, too, have to speak to thee concerning many things.

R U T H.

Of what, my mother?

N A O M I.

After the many years I sojourned in a strange land, hither I returned, unknown to all; grown old in grief, a widow, and in poverty. Who then might recollect that Naomi whom, formerly, they had seen depart from Bethlehem in the freshness of youth, the mother of two beloved sons, and the wife of a righteous, wealthy, and beloved husband? My kindred, most of them, are dead. I, however, have secretly enquired, and this day have made a discovery of moment; even now I made it, while thou wert gleaning in this field. Anxiously I waited thy return, and, unable longer to remain at home, now I come to seek thee.

R U T H.

My mother!—You alarm me.—I dare not ask. Somewhat of melancholy there is

RUTH AND NAOMI. 239

is in your looks. Ah! tell me not this secret.

NAOMI.

Apprehend nothing, my dear child; happy tidings only have I to tell.

RUTH.

And yet tears swim in your eyes.

NAOMI.

They do—They do, my daughter.—
Thou knowest how dearly I love thee.
Only to see thee happy would I live.—
And should we be obliged to part—

RUTH.

To part!—To part!—O, my mother, knowest thou not the vow I made never to quit, never to forsake thee?—Wherefore augment the inquietude I feel? What hast thou heard?

NAOMI.

Here we may be observed.—Gather up thy corn—Let us go. At home I will tell thee all.

RUTH.

R U T H.

Nay, but first promise your daughter never to part from her.

N A O M I.

Doubtest thou my heart, then, or my dear affection?

R U T H.

Yet promise.

N A O M I.

Come, follow me.—(*Naomi offers to go.*)

R U T H.

But wherefore answer me not?

N A O M I, (*Going.*)

Come with me and thou shalt know.

R U T H,

(*Following as if wishing her to stop.*)

Nay, but my mother.—Naomi.—
Nay, stop; ease these cruel fears.

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

B O A Z, J E P H O N A H.

J E P H O N A H.

I Could not help answering her questions, by which means she discovered every thing you had ordered me to conceal.

B O A Z.

The grateful heart easily penetrates into motives with which it is familiar. Equally formed benefactions to feel or to confer, Gratitude possesses a never-failing instinct, by which it divines what delicacy would endeavor to conceal. The ungrateful, only, favors can receive and not suspect from whom.—Didst thou desire her mother to come and speak to me ?

J E P H O N A H.

Yes, yes ; I told her, and I warrant she will presently be here.

B O A Z.

B O A Z.

Did Ruth dine with the reapers ?

J E P H O N A H.

She was too late. When she came back, dinner was almost over. She eat nothing, but what I gave her she put in her basket, and carried it home.

B O A Z.

For her mother.

J E P H O N A H.

Likely enough; the day before yesterday she saved her dinner, likewise. Her mother came into the field, Ruth gave Naomi her portion, and told her, I have dined, and have kept it for you: and yet she had only eaten a morsel of bread, for I had observed her.

B O A Z.

But I told thee to give her fruits and vegetables to-day—and—

J E P H O N A H.

And a double portion of meat.—It is done. I always do as my master bids me.

B O A Z.

BOAZ.

But thou shouldest have invited her to eat, shouldest have made her eat while thou wert present.

JEPHONAH.

She would not. She was sad, penfive and thoughtful.

BOAZ.

Sad

JEPHONAH.

Nay, I believe, she cried.

BOAZ.

Didst thou question her?

JEPHONAH.

No; you did not bid me do that.

BOAZ.

Here comes her mother; leave me, Jephonah.

JEPHONAH.

Ruth, I dare say, came as far as the field with her.

BOAZ.

B O A Z.

Go, see, desire her to wait for her mother in my house.—Here is Naomi.—
Begone.

J E P H O N A H,

(As he is going.)

You have some good action to perform in secret; I know by your sending me away. (*Afide.*) He thinks himself very sly, but I know his ways well enough.

B O A Z.

A good action. Yes, no doubt, it is. And yet I dare not question myself concerning my own motives.

S C E N E II.

B O A Z, N A O M I.

B O A Z.

Come hither, Naomi. I have waited for you with impatience.

N A O M I.

By sending for me hither, my Lord, you have anticipated my wishes. I wanted to speak with you.

B O A Z.

B O A Z.

How happy should I be, could I anticipate them ever !

N A O M I, (*Aside.*)

Little does he imagine what I have to say.

B O A Z.

I know your virtues, your present situation, your affection for your daughter, a daughter most worthy that affection.

N A O M I.

Ruth is the sole consolation of my declining years, my only support, the last blessing Heaven left me, and the gratitude I feel, inspired by her cares, attentions and love, is the more strong because, while she labors for me, while to me she consecrates her youth, she is not fulfilling an indispensable duty. I am not her mother !

B O A Z.

What is it I hear ?—Not her mother !

N A O M I.

Ruth is the widow of my son Mahlon. Two sons I had, but they both are taken from me.—Heaven, to enable me to survive the loss, gave me Ruth.

B O A Z.

B O A Z.

How great is my astonishment!—Ruth a Moabitess, and you born in Bethlehem!

P
N A O M I.

Yes, my Lord—become a widow, and deprived of my sons, I quitted that unfortunate land in which I was a stranger, in which I had lost my all. Ruth followed me. In vain did I press her, in vain entreat. Leave me, said I—Here, in your own country, happily you may live: follow me not, for the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. But Ruth answered, I will go with thee, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.—So saying, Ruth clasped me in her arms, wept upon my neck, and we mingled our tears together.—After that we departed for Bethlehem.

B O A Z.

O Ruth!—How much, Naomi, oughtest thou to love her!—But continue thy story, tell me all thy wants and wishes.—What was thy husband's name?

N A O M I.

NAOMI.

His name, my Lord, should be well known to you.—Elimelech.

BOAZ.

Elimelech!

NAOMI.

You were young when we left Bethlehem, but you must have heard your father, Salmon, speak of Elimelech.

BOAZ.

If I forget not, Elimelech was our neighbour, and even our kinsman.

NAOMI.

He was.—Not well informed, myself, of our degrees of kindred, I have made enquiries, and have now discovered Boaz is our nearest kinsman.

BOAZ.

I—I the nearest kinsman of Ruth!—Oh, my mother!—Oh, Naomi!—But are you certain?—

NAOMI.

This very morning I have consulted the elders: they have shewn me you are our kinsman.

BOAZ.

B O A Z.

But the nearest?

N A O M I.

I know of no other. All those we left
at Bethlehem are dead.

B O A Z, (*Aside.*)*(After a moment's thoughtful silence.)*

There is but one way to act.

N A O M I.

That of espousing Ruth. Such is the
law.

B O A Z.

O Naomi! didst thou but know what
passes in my bosom, how deeply I am af-
fected!—But remain where thou art.—
I will send Ruth hither.—Wait for me
both in this place. I will presently re-
turn,—and ye then shall know what my
present feelings are.

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

N A O M I.

Praised be the God of Israel, I already know them.—He loves Ruth.—But who might see, might hear, might converse with her, and not love her?—And shalt thou then be happy, my daughter?—Never can I repay thy attachment and love: but I can behold, I can rejoice at thy happiness.—Let me but be a witness of that, only for a moment, and my miseries shall be all forgotten, my vows accomplished, and I shall die content.

S C E N E IV.

N A O M I, R U T H.

R U T H.

My mother——

N A O M I.

Wherefore dost thou tremble so?

R U T H.

R U T H.

Jephonah detained me in the house, questioned me.—I answered, I know not what.—I was thinking of you—and of what you had just related.—Boaz suddenly came in.

N A O M I.

Well.

R U T H.

I cannot describe the impression his presence, so unexpected, made upon me. He saw my agitation, my confusion, and took pity on them. He did not approach me, stopped not a moment, except while he desired me to come hither.

N A O M I.

But wherefore art thou thus affected?

R U T H.

My mother.—I dare not ask—Does Boaz—know that he is our kinsman? I fear you have told him all—and yet you promised me to defer, at least for some days, this fearful explanation.

N A O M I.

Boaz is informed. I have told him the whole truth.

R U T H.

R U T H.

Mercy!

N A O M I.

Take courage.—I read his eyes, his heart. He loves thee.

R U T H.

Did he avow his love?

N A O M I.

His emotion was extreme. He left me precipitately, to go, no doubt, to assemble the elders, and inform them of this event.

R U T H.

Went!—And without explaining himself!

N A O M I.

He desired me to wait his return, here, in this place.

R U T H.

O my mother! such is your love for me, you are too eager to believe every body loves me like you.—Alas! it is but too probable you are deceived.—As for the law, that would oblige him to espouse me, of that I will not take advantage.—

M

Perhaps

Perhaps he has other engagements, other intents, other desires.—If he has told you so, oh! do not conceal it from me.

NAOMI.

With a single word I will dissipate thy fears.—No sooner had he heard he was my nearest kinsman than, by immediate impulse, he called me his mother.

RUTH.

His mother!—Boaz called Naomi his mother!—Oh! word of affection.—But was it possible he might love Ruth without feeling the endearing sensations of a son?—Should he espouse me he will permit us to dwell together.—Yes, my mother, you I prefer to the whole world. Nothing should ever make me renounce my duty towards you, the pleasure of aiding you, of watching over you, of living to make you happy.

NAOMI.

Yet, my daughter, should Boaz refuse the incumbrance of my old age?—

RUTH.

And think you, then, I would consent to such a union?—For you I have no secrets.—I own I feel I love.—But should he not adopt my mother, I should love no longer.

longer.—No, never will I marry unless my husband be the son of Naomi.—You see, my mother, with what sincerity I speak. You know my heart, do you, then, be equally explicit. Tell me all you think. No inquietude do I feel that you should be rejected by Boaz: if I am dear to him so shall you be also. But, tell me, will not this marriage afflict you? Shall you feel the same affection for the wife of Boaz as for the widow of Mahlon?

N A O M I.

Art not thou my daughter, and can I ever cease to be thy mother?

R U T H.

I am wholly yours, do with me what shall seem good unto you. If my marriage with Boaz would give you the slightest pang, forgotten be it, and thought of no more.—Never have you imposed a command upon me, and, therefore, often have I grieved. Had I been born your daughter you would, at some moments, have spoken with the authority of a mother.—Be then thus kind at last; treat me like your child. Give me the only proof of affection you ever omitted. Impose a command, that I may feel the sweet pleasure of obeying.

N A O M I.

How?—What have I to command?
—Have not thy cares unceasingly precluded
and fore-run my wishes?

R U T H.

These were my pleasures: the duty of
self-denial never have I known.

N A O M I.

O my daughter, since thou hast abandon-
ed thy country to follow me, to alleviate
misery, procure me subsistence, and con-
secrate thy youth and life to comfort my
old age—since thou hast done these things
without effort, without regret, without
self-denial, what must I think, what must
I feel at conduct so inestimable, so endear-
ing, so sublime?—No, my child, be sa-
tisfied, banish these vain fears. Wed
Boaz, and think not I shall grieve there-
at. Only by seeing thee happy, and in a
station worthy of thy virtues, can I myself
be truly so.

R U T H.

And, if I love him, wilt thou love him
also?

N A O M I.

Can'st thou doubt me?

R U T H.

R U T H.

Nay, but love him like thy son?

N A O M I.

How thinkest thou I can love him less
in whom thou findest felicity?

R U T H.

O my mother!

N A O M I.

He comes.—

R U T H

Suffer me to leave you. (*Ruth retires
some paces.*)

N A O M I.

Whither art thou going?—Come back,
my daughter, 'tis Jephonah.

R U T H.

What hath he to tell us?

S C E N E V.

NAOMI, RUTH, JEPHONAH.

JEPHONAH.

I am sent hither by my master.

NAOMI.

To what purport?

JEPHONAH.

He fears you are weary of waiting, and has sent me to entreat you yet will kindly stay, though it will be some time before he will be able to return.

NAOMI.

Nothing more?

JEPHONAH.

Oh! I know the whole.—I followed my master. He first went to one of the elders, with whom he spoke in private, after having commanded me to assemble, in his name, nine other of the elders in
the

the gates of the city. From this, I knew some public declaration was to follow.

RUTH, (*Aside.*)

I scarce can breathe.

NAOMI.

And what happened at the gates of the city?

JEPHONAH.

My master, and the elder his friend, arrived there just as I did.—He has made his declaration.—He told the elders he was your relation, that he was interested in your welfare.—Many other things he did, and ended by requiring them to summon thither the young man.

RUTH.

What young man?

JEPHONAH.

Samir, the young man who is your nearest kinsman.

RUTH.

Heavens! my nearest kinsman!

M 4

JEPHO-

J E P H O N A H.

And did you not know it?—When my master went hence and left you, he was informed of it; for, as he walked through the streets, he several times repeated the name of the young man. The elder to whom he went, and who well knew all the families of Bethlehem, soon informed him that the nearest kinsman of Elimelech, the late husband of Naomi, was Samir.

R U T H, (*Afide.*)

Whither shall I fly? I cannot restrain my tears.

J E P H O N A H.

Boaz explained all these things to the elders, and required that Samir should be summoned, that he might speak with him.—You may be certain he will oblige the young man to espouse Ruth, for such are the laws.—While he was waiting for Samir, he called me and sent me here to you.

R U T H, (*Afide.*)

Wretched woman that I am!

J E P H O A

JEPHONAH, (*To Ruth.*)

Ruth, I congratulate you. Deserve, and you shall obtain happiness. Samir is a good, a worthy young man, and fears the Lord.—He is besides wealthy.

NAOMI.

Enough, Jephonah, leave us. I would speak with my daughter.

JEPHONAH.

And I will return to my master; perhaps I may meet him on the way.

S C E N E VI.

NAOMI, RUTH.

RUTH.

Oh, my mother, let us begone, let us quit this fatal field; which, Oh! would I had never entered.

NAOMI.

Nay, my daughter, but we must wait for Boaz.

M 5

RUTH.

R U T H.

Let us begone.—What Boaz!—He whom I thought so good, so generous!—Alas! how little did I know his heart!—By what right would he dispose of me? Thinks he I will consent to marry this stranger?—'Tis only to compassion, then, I am indebted for what he has done.—You, my mother, thought he loved me; you persuaded me to think so, and lo! ye, how we have been deceived.

N A O M I.

Ruth, is it thee, my daughter, that murmurs thus at Providence!

R U T H.

Sudden these emotions are, and strange to my heart; pardon them, my mother, O pardon these wanderings of the mind.

N A O M I.

Didst thou know how deeply thy grief afflicts me.—

R U T H.

I was unable to conceal it.—You have a right to know every thought of my heart.—Yes, in you, my mother,
I shall

RUTH AND NAOMI. 251

I shall find consolation.—Heavens ! heard
I not the voice of Boaz !

NAOMI.

Speaking to Jephonah.

RUTH.

He comes. Where shall I hide myself ?

NAOMI.

Be firm, my daughter ; recall thy reason, thy virtue.

RUTH.

Alas ! it was reason, it was virtue first
taught me to love.—He will see I have
been weeping.—Wherefore can I not
fly ?

NAOMI.

He is here.

RUTH.

How shall I sustain this interview ?

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

NAOMI, RUTH, BOAZ.

B O A Z,

(Aside, and at some distance.)

They are yonder.—I tremble.—If I have deceived myself.—*(Boaz advances, Ruth turns away to conceal her agitation; after a short silence, Boaz speaks again.)*—Ruth, your destiny at present depends upon yourself.—I return from an assembly of the people. Samir, in presence of the elders, hath acknowledged he is your nearest kinsman.

R U T H.

And I, my Lord, will assemble the people to declare, aloud, I will never marry my nearest kinsman.

B O A Z.

Do you then refuse Samir?

R U T H.

Wherefore, my Lord, did you not ask me that question before?—Was it right, without the consent of my mother, without

without my consent, to offer my hand to a stranger?

B O A Z.

I supposed, perhaps too rashly, you would refuse him that hand.

R U T H.

Why then have you had the cruelty to act thus?

B O A Z.

Could the right of Samir to espouse you have been contested, I neither should have assembled the people nor the elders.— But Samir knew you not, and I might justly hope he would cede his claim to me, as our laws permit.

N A O M I.

This I ought before to have divined.

R U T H.

Well, my Lord, and hath Samir given his consent?

B O A Z.

Nothing is wanting to my present happiness, but yours.

R U T H.

R U T H.

O my mother ! answer for me.

N A O M I,

(Presenting the hand of Ruth.)

Boaz, receive this hand, the support of my old age ; this hand which so often hath dried my tears ; so chearfully, so continually hath labored for my support.

B O A Z.

Yes, with respect, with affection, and with joy I receive it.

R U T H.

My Lord.—My mother will soon be your mother.—

B O A Z.

I understand you.—And surely you could not imagine that Boaz would separate Ruth and Naomi.—Oh no.—Judge how dear she is to me, since it is to the attachment you had to her that I owe the sensations I at present feel.

R U T H.

And shall I then pass my days and divide my happiness with Naomi and Boaz.

N A O M I.

N A O M I.

O generous Boaz.

B O A Z.

The people are still assembled, let us return to the elders. There let me proclaim our union and my present bliss. (*The sound of rustic music is heard.*) But, yonder, I perceive the reapers coming, led by Jephonah, stop we a moment.

S C E N E VIII, And Last.

NAOMI, RUTH, BOAZ, JEPHONAH,
REAPERS *and* GLEANERS.

J E P H O N A H, (*To Boaz.*)

Behold here thy servants, my Lord, come to testify their joy. Virtue thou rewardest by espousing Ruth. All who hear it rejoice, and all declare the daughter of Naomi is worthy to become the wife of Boaz.

B O A Z.

She will become the benefactress of ye all. Me she will make better, and you more happy.

R U T H.

R U T H.

Boaz will permit me to imitate his benevolence, and to scatter corn in the gleaner's path.

B O A Z.

Those, especially, who glean for their parents, shall more than ever be welcome to these fields.—Jephonah, spread the tables in the hall, thither I invite the reapers and gleaners, and thither will I presently return and make merry with them.—Naomi, arm in arm with, and supported by, your son and daughter, thus let us go before the elders.

R U T H.

My mother, before thou leadeſt me to that aſſembly where the deſtinies of Ruth and Boaz ſhall be for ever united, give me thy benediction. Bleſs thy daughter. (*She kneels to Naomi.*)

N A O M I.

Never, from the firſt inſtant that Heaven gave me Ruth, have I ceaſed to bleſs thee, my daughter. The Lord God of Iſrael, at laſt, hath heard my prayers, for he rejects not the ardent vows of gratitude.—One only remaining wiſh have I to form; permit me, O God, to ſee it accom-

accomplished.—Thy virtue, my daughter, giveth me every right to hope—Yes, thou shalt be a mother. Thou, the best of daughters, shalt be a happy mother, and Naomi shall press to her bosom the child of Ruth (*She raises her hands to Heaven.*) O Lord God of my fathers, hear and permit this child to be the root of a numerous posterity. To its descendants reserve honors and glory which may for ever perpetuate in the memory of man its happy parents. Oh! leave, leave in oblivion the destructive names of warriors who have conquered kingdoms, ravaged and laid them desolate, but let not the names of Ruth and Boaz perish with themselves.—Let the story of Ruth be known in after ages, that children, and young men and maidens, assembled in the houses of their fathers, may listen, or with reverence relate, even to the end of time, the virtues and the love of Ruth; and let her be remembered as the most tender example of filial piety.—Such are my benedictions.—Arise, my daughter, arise. (*Ruth arises and Naomi embraces her.*)

R U T H.

My mother! Boaz! O excess of happiness!

B O A Z.

Come then, loveliest of women, and
make

make man perfect. Come, and solemnly declare you accept the hand of Boaz.

NAOMI.

Come, my daughter, let us not delay.

RUTH, (*Going.*)

O God of Israel! God of my mother! render me worthy of all thy mercies.

THE END.

THE
W I D O W
OF
S A R E P T A.

A SACRED DRAMA,
IN ONE ACT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ELIJAH.

The WIDOW of SAREPTA.

Her SON.

*The Scene is in the Country of the Sidonians,
near to the City of Sidon.*

EPISTLE to MADAME ----.

M A D A M E,

IMAGINE how much I value a piece which you particularly honor and prefer, and which you have deigned to think meritorious. How often, while I was writing this drama, were you present to my imagination! Though far different in situation, was it possible, while tracing the character of the tenderest of mothers, of a woman equally benevolent and virtuous, not unceasingly to recollect so august, so affecting, a picture of those high qualities I was endeavoring to describe? Happy the author, Madam, who is sufficiently near so natural, so noble, an original. How great his advantage, who thus can behold virtue in all its effulgence, and observe traits equally amiable, seducing, and sublime.

A D V E R-

W. C. C. 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200

201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following is the Story, taken from the Holy Scripture, which has furnished the Subject of the WIDOW of SAREPTA.

AHAB King of Israel espoused Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Sidonians, and, led astray by that Princess, worshipped idols. The Prophet Elijah, by the command of God, declared to the King that, for several years, neither dew nor rain should water the earth. Elijah, being persecuted by Ahab, was obliged to fly and hide himself near the brook of Cherith, beside Jordan.—After some time the brook dried up, there being no rain in the land; and the Lord ordered the Prophet to go to Sidon, a city of the Sidonians. Being come near the city, he met a poor woman, gathering of sticks: he asked her for water to drink, and she went strait to fetch it.—He called her back to beg a morsel of bread; but she answered, *As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and behold I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die; and*
Elijah

Elijah said unto her, Fear not, go, and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and thy son; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

After this the widow's son died, Elijah raised him again, and restored him to his mother, who said to the Prophet, *Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.*

THE

THE
W I D O W
O F
S A R E P T A.

She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh with her hands.
She stretcheth forth her hand to the poor, yea, she
reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman
that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Prov. chap. xxxi. ver. 13, 20, 30.

S C E N E I.

The WIDOW, *seated at her door,*
spinning, and her SON by her side.

The W I D O W,

(*Aside, after having looked earnestly at her
son.*)

HOW pale he is!—How fallen
away!—Poor boy.—(*Aloud.*) My
son, dost thou not find the morning air
refreshing, the day more serene than
heretofore?

N

S O N.

S O N.

I breathe with pain, and feel the sun
already hot and burning.

W I D O W.

Wilt thou walk among the trees?

S O N.

I cannot walk.

W I D O W, (*Aside.*)

Alas!

S O N.

When, my mother, shall we again be-
hold verdure and flowers?

W I D O W.

Now is the season in which they used
to appear and flourish; yet, now, we
hear no more the warbling of birds; bare
are the trees, and the dry flowers fall in
dust on the scorched grass; fountains,
brooks, and rivers, cease to flow; in vain
would we seek the cool shade of the forest;
rain moistens not the earth, and plants
and fruits, men and beasts, all languish,
all droop and die.—Such are the plagues
by

by which we are afflicted.—Long too have they endured.—All nature is changed; the fatal revolution, at once, deprives us of rain, refreshing rays, abundance and health.

SON.

And shall we then, my mother, no more behold the spring.

WIDOW.

Oh! my Son.

SON.

I still remember those happy days when the trees looked so green, so beautiful the meadows.—Never shall I forget the water flowing from the well and falling from the high rock. Yonder it was, I see the place; but the water is no more, the rock alone remains, and as I look towards it, the sight makes me melancholy.—The flowers, too, which I so often have gathered with delight.—Our vine-trees, our olives, and our young lambs—

WIDOW.

Alas! dear child, thou, already, art familiar with woes unknown to infancy or youth; painful remembrance and bitter regret.

N 2

SON.

S O N.

And the bitterest is, my mother, to recollect how once your maidens came about you, worked for you, waited on you, obeyed you.—Alas! now you are alone.

W I D O W.

Alone!—Am I not with thee, my son?—Thou, to me, art every thing.

S O N.

Could I but assist you in your labors!—I am old enough, and yet I want the strength——

W I D O W.

And dost thou pity me? Dost thou weep over my humiliations? Thou! sole object of all my inquietude.—Oh, my son, still should I be happy, still supremely blest, would Heaven but restore thy health.

S O N.

You weep.—Do you not hope, my mother, to see me recover?

W I D O W.

Dreadful question! Ah! did I doubt it, would it be possible for me to live?

S O N.

S O N.

And yet I am very weak.—Could you but lead me to the city, then would I go to the temple of Baal, and kneeling with you, my mother, pray to our gods.

W I D O W.

To our gods!—Ah! my son, them have I ceased to revere: long have I known the errors of our absurd belief, and the worship of Baal.—Not virtue doth our religion inspire, but vice it authorises.—No, doubt not, my son, that our priests are impostors and false our gods.

S O N.

Whom then shall we invoke?

W I D O W.

Him who hath created the universe.

S O N.

But who shall inform us how to pay him worship?

W I D O W.

He himself hath engraven his worship in our hearts, hath inspired us with the love of good and the hatred of evil. Him

N 3

we

we obey when we obey the dictates of conscience.

S O N.

But how is he to be served? How should we pray unto him?

W I D O W.

Alas! I know not; but the virtuous and submissive heart, that desires this knowledge, ought to preserve the hope that it shall sometime be enlightened.

S O N.

Him the Sidonians must then offend?

W I D O W.

Too much they have merited his wrath, by their crimes and inhuman sacrifices.—The dreadful dearth which now desolates the land, sickness and famine, nay, all the ills under which we at present groan, are but, perhaps, the fearful effects of an unseen power, whom I know not, and whom they disobey. It is rumored that the original cause of all our misfortunes was the union of Jezabel, our King's daughter, with Ahab, King of Israel.—Altars hath she built in Samaria, and there our idols are worshipped; from that fatal moment our calamities began.

S O N.

S O N.

The gods of Israel then are wrathful against us?

W I D O W.

One God, alone, do the Israelites adore. From him, it is said, they have received holy laws, benevolent precepts, and commandments pure and just.—Ah ! if it be true that the God of Israel commands us to be virtuous, he shall be my God.

S O N.

Hear you, my mother, how the wind whistles?—And yet how scorching !——What whirlwinds of dust !

W I D O W.

A fearful tempest is rising.—Let us go in.

S O N.

The wind is louder.—Thick clouds are gathering.

W I D O W.

Let us make haste.—Come, my son, lean upon my arm.

N 4

S O N.

S O N.

I cannot stand.

W I D O W.

Oh Heavens ! And am I too weak to
carry thee ?

S O N.

Do not weep, my mother.——Help
me, a little, and I shall be able to get to
the door.

W I D O W,

(Bearing him in her arms.)

Come, dear boy.

S O N,

(Stepping slowly with her.)

What a storm !—The trees bend and
the branches break.

W I D O W.

Take courage, come.

S O N.

Hark !——I hear strange sounds and
groans !

W I D O W.

W I D O W.

They come from the wood !

S O N.

Some one, no doubt, is in want of help.—Run, my mother.

W I D O W.

I cannot leave thee here ; when I have brought thee into the house, I will go.

S O N.

Come, then.

W I D O W,

(Opening the door.)

I will presently come back to thee.

S O N.

Do not be uneasy, I feel myself better. I only want repose: I will lie down and sleep.

W I D O W.

And oh ! may thy sleep be sweet and refreshing. *(She kisses her son, shuts the door after her, and goes towards the wood.)*

N 5

SCENE

S C E N E II.

W I D O W.

Dear child, how many pangs, how many mortal inquietudes doth thy present declining health occasion me! (*Still advancing towards the wood.*)—The clouds disperse; the wind abates.—I hear no more those plaintive cries which seemed to call for aid.—Yet, certainly, it was no illusion. My whole soul was moved, for I heard the voice of distress. (*She stops and looks round.*)—No one can I see.—I will return to my son.—Ah! if his sleep be sound and peaceful, how happy shall I be while I behold him tranquil and at ease!—Softly will I sit and work by his side.—Yet, no: at the whirl of the spindle he may awake.—Silent I must look. I shall not be obliged to restrain my tears, they may flow, at least, without constraint, for, sleeping, he will not see them flow.—(*She raises her clasped hands towards Heaven.*)—Oh! Thou whom know I do not, but whom to know I desire! Thou who speakest intelligibly to my heart! Thou who hast created the heavens and the earth! Ah! what relief to my pangs, what delight to my soul, could I adore thee, pray to thee, invoke thy blessings on my child, and could I know my prayers were heard!—Only

——Only by thy works I know thee, thy infinite power : and, thy power being infinite, thou thyself must be beneficent.

——Look down upon thy servant, enlighten her eyes, and restore her son to health.——Innocent hath been my life, and truth my constant pursuit.——No, thou wilt not reject my prayers, thou wilt deign to instruct thy handmaid, and to preserve her son.——Hark ! I hear the sound of feet.—Some one in the wood.—I will run.—(*She goes towards the wood.*)—A venerable Seer approaches !—Weak and exhausted he appears ! Let me, if I can, support his trembling steps.

S C E N E III.

WIDOW, ELIJAH.

ELIJAH.

Where am I ?—In what wild place ?

WIDOW.

You are in the land of the Sidonians, near the city of Sarepta. If you want rest come into my cottage.

ELIJAH.

Who art thou ?

WIDOW.

WIDOW.

A widow I am; an only son is all my wealth, and I live by the labor of my hands.—Plenty and happiness once were mine, nor did I make an ill use of my wealth; and, though now I am poor, yet I despair not.

ELIJAH.

By what reverse of fortune art thou thus?

WIDOW.

Public calamity. The earth deprived of dew and rain is become sterile. The cares of agriculture are abandoned, because they are useless; and famine, that most dreadful scourge, has destroyed all rank and distinction. The rich is now but as the poor; and the lord of large possessions dies, like the indigent, for want of bread. The courtier, in his palace, learns, at length, the vanity of luxury and magnificence, and the real and solid value of Nature's gifts. Such are the woes which desolate and distract our afflicted land.

ELIJAH.

Oh people, blind, iniquitous and perverse!—Break in pieces your idols, pull down your altars, the works of wicked hands and impious! Acknowledge the
true

true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and he, long suffering and ever merciful, shall pardon ye, and ye shall live!

W I D O W.

What sayest thou?—The true God!—Him whom I would adore!—Canst thou instruct me? Knowest thou him? Is he thy God?—He hears me not!—He seems in pain.

E L I J A H.

Strength forakes me.—Fatigue—thirst.—

W I D O W.

Alas! all I have is a little oil and meal, which I preserve for my son.

E L I J A H.

Hath thy son remained many days, like me, without food?

W I D O W,

(*Aside, beholding Elijah.*)

How pale!—He reels.—I cannot behold him perish—And, yet, my son! Should he wake hungry—Alas! my rent heart—

E L I J A H.

Help, help!—My life is in thy hands!
Help, help!

W I D O W.

W I D O W.

Oh! my son!——Alas! venerable stranger, as the Lord thy God liveth, I have no bread; nothing have I but a handful of meal, in a barrel, and a little oil, in a cruse.

E L I J A H.

Fear not: go and make me a cake thereof, and bring it me, and after make for thee and thy son; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

W I D O W.

He surely is a man of God, his words are inspiration.—Yes, his God is the true God, to whom all things are possible. I feel a power and a light divine; a faith that fortifies my heart, that ordains me not to suffer this holy man to perish at my door for want.

E L I J A H.

Go, I will wait for thee here; go, and doubt not the puissance or the merciful goodness of the God of Israel.

W I D O W.

Yes, holy man, what I have I will give unto thee.

S C E N E

S C E N E IV.

E L I J A H.

This woman is a Sidonian, uninstructed, ignorant of the just and sublime law of Jehovah. From the love of virtue she acts.—Oh! God of my fathers, deign to make her truly worthy of thee; shed the beams of divine truth in her heart, and multiply thy blessings on this benevolent, this hospitable widow.—What piercing, what lamentable cries are these! (*The cottage door is open, and Elijah hears the Widow within, who exclaims.*)

W I D O W.

My son! My son!—Oh! My son!
My son!

E L I J A H.

What misfortune! What misery!

S C E N E V.

E L I J A H, W I D O W.

W I D O W, (*Distractedly.*)

He is gone!—'Tis past—My all, my
life, my soul is fled!—Oh! my son, my
son!

son!—(*She falls on a grass bank beside the door.*)

ELIJAH,

Is thy son dead?

WIDOW.

Thou, unhappy stranger, didst detain me! Breathless he lies! His last sigh escaped and I received it not!—Oh! my son, my son! But I will return; dead, I will still gaze upon him, and expire by his side!

ELIJAH.

Stay.—Listen and be patient.—A Power supernatural comes over me, and restores me all my strength! Unfortunate but virtuous mother, believe and pray: kneel with me and invoke the God of Israel.

WIDOW.

Wherefore invoke him?—My son is dead!

ELIJAH.

Yet, he can make him live.

WIDOW,

(*Falling with enthusiastic fervency on her knees.*)

Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!

ELIJAH.

ELIJAH.

God of my fathers! Jehovah, omnipotent in mercy, hear my prayer; behold the sighs and groans of this poor widow, give her life, light, and happiness.—Yea! Thou hearest me!—I feel thee!—Thy spirit is upon me!—(*Rising hastily towards the cottage.*)

WIDOW, (*Rising also.*)

Oh! may this——may this be?

ELIJAH.

Beware of doubt.—Hope every thing, and follow me not. (*Elijah goes into the cottage.*)

SCENE VI.

WIDOW.

Hope! May I? Is it possible I may hope!—What he, whom I have beheld dead, may he live again!—Yes, he may.—Great God, I cannot doubt thy power, or thy bounty supreme.—Yet, alas! what have I done to deserve a miracle from thee?—(*She listens.*) God of Mercy!—It is his voice!—I hear him.—My son! My son! (*Flies precipitately to the cottage door.*)

SCENE

S C E N E VII, And Last.

ELIJAH *leading the SON by the hand.*

W I D O W.

W I D O W.

My son!

S O N.

(Running into her arms and clinging round her neck.)

Oh, my mother!

W I D O W.

And livest thou! Breathest thou! Do I behold thee! Do I clasp thee in my arms! *(Holding him at arms length, and looking stedfastly upon him.)* Yes!—'Tis thee!—'Tis my son!—'Tis thee, and health blooms upon thy cheek. *(She falls on her knees to Elijah, who raises her.)* Man of God! whose gracious image thou bearest, whose minister of mercy thou art, now I know that thy God is the true God, the God I sought, the God whom, even in error, I adored!—Instruct, enlighten me, tell me how I best may worship, best may express, best may show how fully I feel his goodness!

ELIJAH.

ELIJAH.

Thy present gratitude is the sacrifice and the worship which pleaseth him best.

WIDOW.

And thou, venerable Sage, Prophet of God, be thou my guide, henceforth thy precepts will I adore!

ELIJAH.

Adore Jehovah. Mere man am I. Persecuted by a barbarous King, an impious Queen, to the deserts I fled. Hither the Lord ordained me to come; hither, to thy succour, his almighty hand directed me. To Elijah he hath given the glory of explaining his law to thee, virtuous and benevolent. The high crimes of the haughty Jezabel have kindled the wrath of the Lord; but, though to the wicked terrible, to the meek and righteous he is merciful and good. He hath restored thy son, to health restored him, and thee he will preserve from that dreadful famine that doth afflict this land. The oil and the meal, which thou reservedst for thy son, thy hospitality and faith would have bestowed on me, who, though suffering, yet, to thee a stranger; that oil and that meal shall endure so long as the dearth endures, shall give subsistence to thee, thy son, and all those who shall hither come to implore thy pity.

WIDOW.

WIDOW.

Bounty of heaven!—All! may I succor all?—It shall be my duty then to seek the wretched.—Oh happiness unhopèd!

ELIJAH.

As durable, as pure shall it be; and, though thou diest, thy name shall never die. Thy hospitality, thy faith, and the rewards bestowed on them by the Lord God of Israel, these, as examples, shall remain, so long as the earth, the sea, and all therein, remain.

THE END.

THE
RETURN
OF
TOBIAS,
A SACRED DRAMA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

TOBIT, the Father.

ANNA, his Wife.

TOBIAS, the Son.

SOPHAR.

ELIPHAZ, Friend and Kinsman of Tobit.

The ANGEL RAPHAEL.

ADVERTISEMENT.

TOBIT, son of Tobiel, of the tribe of Naphtali, was a model of the most perfect virtue, equally respectable for his piety, his charity towards the poor, his resignation in adversity, his patience towards a contumelious wife, and his tenderness for his son. The affecting instructions he gave this beloved son, sometime before their separation, cannot be read without emotion.

Tobit sent his son into the country of the Medes, and confided him to the care of the Angel Raphael, who had assumed the person of a young man, and the name of Azarias.* The journey was long, and Tobit was equally afflicted by his own fears and the iterated complaints of Anna, his wife, who bitterly reproached him for having trusted her son to the care of a young unexperienced man.

At length the Angel brought back the son, Tobias, who had espoused Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, and who returned with his wife, and great wealth, no more to quit his father and his family. He likewise brought with him the liver of a mon-

* The Angel tells Tobit that his name is Azarias, and that he is the son of Ananias. The word, Azarias, signifies *succor of God*, and Ananias, *grace and gift of God*.

storous fish, which he had killed on the banks of the Tigris, and which cured his father of blindness. The latter offered Azarias the half of the riches with which his son returned loaded. Thereupon the Angel made himself known, and told Tobit that the happiness he now enjoyed, was the reward of his virtue, his piety, and his alms. He added that he should still live long and many years, and Tobit accordingly lived to the age of one hundred and two, having uttered many predictions before his death.

From this extract, it may be perceived that, in the following drama, I have scrupulously followed the scripture, and preserved the character and traits under which it represents the wife of the wise and virtuous Tobit.

T H E
R E T U R N
O F
T O B I A S.

He that teacheth his son grieveth the enemy ; and before his friend he shall rejoice of him.

ECCLESIASTICUS xxx. 3.

Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity. For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.

JOB xxxiv. 10, 11.

S C E N E I.

A Garden.

SOPHAR, (*with a watering pot in her hand.*)

TO be continually at work, either in the house or the garden, or else guiding my poor old master, who is blind, to these things I should patiently submit, if it were not for the ill temper of my mistress.—She is a strange woman.—Ever since her son has been gone there is no such thing as giving her satisfaction ; and,
O indeed,

indeed, for this fortnight past, she seems to have been totally beside herself.—To be sure I can easily suppose that a mother, distracted for the safety of her child, cannot always be good tempered and reasonable; but she has no right, because she loves her son, to torment her husband, affront her neighbours, and make her servant miserable; to go and come, and scold, and cry, and neither let us rest by day, nor sleep by night. If it were not for my master I should have been gone long ago. But who could leave the good, the patient, the charitable Tobit?—Here is somebody coming.—Oh, it is Eliphaz, the friend of the family.

S C E N E II.

SOPHAR, ELIPHAZ.

Ah! Sir, how happy am I to see you returned, after three months absence: and how happy will my master be.

ELIPHAZ.

Where is Tobit?—I find nobody in the house.

SOPHAR.

He is gone, with Anna his wife, to walk on the high road which their son, Tobias, took, when he departed hence.

ELI-

ELIPHAZ.

And have they yet, then, no news of their son?

SOPHAR.

None——None.

ELIPHAZ.

Alas! deep must be the affliction of my most dear and respectable friend.

SOPHAR.

Yes, yes; deep, indeed! But the Lord sustains and consoles him. And then, though he is not rich, and though he is blind, he does not let that day pass in which he does not some good action. When one remembers how small his possessions are, one says, he is very poor; but, when one sees how much he gives, one is tempted to believe him more wealthy than many of those who are supposed exceedingly rich. You know, too, how much he is beloved and respected. All his neighbours come to ask his advice. He appeases their quarrels, prevents lawsuits, and restores peace and affection. They feel themselves obliged to follow his counsels; he corrects them, yet doth not seem to reprove, his words are so mild his speech so simple.

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ELIPHAZ.

He doth not exhort to, he inspires virtue: and such shall ever be the blessed privilege of an upright and feeling heart.

SOPHAR.

These things help to dispel his cares.

ELIPHAZ.

Affliction he may know; he is a man, his sensations are strong and lively, but he hath a noble fortitude, which affliction never shall overwhelm. No, Tobit never can be utterly unhappy.—But tell me, how doth thy mistress? I much fear her natural impetuosity should now, particularly, encrease the pangs he feels.

SOPHAR.

And you have good reason for your fears. People say, the peevishness of Anna hath always been a torment to Tobit. For, though she means well, she is so easily vexed, and so soon in a passion, that——

ELIPHAZ.

Yes, her heart is good, but her violence is ev'ning.

SOPHAR.

SOPHAR.

Ah ! what you have seen is nothing. Her grief, at the absence of her son, is so great, and she is become so very unreasonable, that no one, who had not the patience of my master, could endure her behaviour. She passes the whole day in weeping, sobbing, saying all manner of ill-natured bitter things to my master, and in scolding me. But that is not all ; during the night she is just as restless, for, then, what she calls her prognostics come over her ; and these prognostics always alarm and awake the whole house. The lamp must be lighted, and up we must get ; then she cries, moans, prays, and again begins her lamentations, and reproaches ; commands every body to listen, forbids them to reply, and then complains of their silence. Nobody seeks to comfort her ; she is abandoned by the whole world ; her all is lost ; nothing remains to her but a husband, insensible to her affliction, and a foolish servant ; the one she will leave, the other dismiss, and retire to a desert, there to expire in peace. And this is her continual practice every night till day break.

ELIPHAZ.

But with what can she reproach Tobit ?

SOPHAR.

For having suffered her son to depart ;
and, especially, for having trusted him to
that stranger, that young Azarias.

ELIPHAZ.

I never saw the young man, but Tobit
hath told me so much to his advantage—

SOPHAR.

To confess the truth, my master's conduct in this matter is very singular. You know his son, and would you think it ? Azarias, at most, is but as old as Tobias ; nay, he is still handsomer ; with such a colour, such pure red and white, in short he is as beautiful as an angel ! Now, when my poor mistress recollects his youthful figure, his engaging countenance, and the errors incident to his age, she shudders with fear. And it is natural she should ; were his appearance more severe and forbidding there would be much less cause for apprehension.

ELIPHAZ.

But, tell me, Sophar, dost think it will be long before thy master returns from his walk ?

SOPHAR.

SOPHAR.

Anna led him under the great willow ; and, when once she has him there, alone, she usually keeps him long enough.

ELIPHAZ.

What great willow ?

SOPHAR.

The one at which Anna and Tobit took leave of their son, when he departed with Azarias. My mistress cannot behold that tree without feeling redoubled grief, and yet she is continually going thither.

ELIPHAZ.

Poor Tobit !

SOPHAR.

But what astonishes and even pains me most is that he don't complain, nor even dare I murmur, in his presence, at the unreasonable passion of my mistress. He often appears affected at it, but never surprised.—But I hear some one in the house.—Perhaps I may be wanted. I must go.—Should it be my master, I will come back and tell you.

S C E N E III.

E L I P H A Z.

If Tobit be not happy, what mortal shall dare complain of not being so!—— But the God of Heaven will not suffer all his virtues to remain unrewarded; he will restore his son, that worthy object of all his tenderness and cares.——Some one is coming.——Is it not the voice of Tobit?——It is.

S C E N E IV.

E L I P H A Z, T O B I T (*led by*) S O P H A R.

T O B I T.

Where is he?—Where is Eliphaz?

E L I P H A Z,

(*Running and embracing Tobit.*)

Here, here I am, my friend.

T O B I T.

Leave us, Sophar.

S O P H A R.

But can Eliphaz take care of you?

T O B I T.

TOBIT.

Go, fear not; a true friend is always a good guide.

SOPHAR, (*Aside, as she is going.*)

Well, well. I will endeavour to keep my mistress away, however, that she may not come and disturb them.

S C E N E VI.

TOBIT, ELIPHAZ.

TOBIT.

Well, Eliphaz, here thou findest me, as thou ledest me.—I have heard no news of my son.

ELIPHAZ.

I know thou hast not, yet still I live in hope.

TOBIT.

Hope, my friend, is a momentary and deceitful consolation, by yielding to which man is but exposed more frequently to feel his afflictions, which hope for a moment expels. Not vainly to afflict ourselves,

selves, not to raise up illusive phantoms was foresight given to man: God requires it should render us useful, but not lead us astray. When action and determination become necessary, we ought, no doubt, to look into futurity; but to penetrate its dark limits in search of flattering chimeras, or to form spectres of terror, were folly, or madness.

ELIPHAZ.

What then are the feelings which make you so tranquilly support your present cause of sorrow?

T O B I T.

Resignation; which, to feeble, dependant, yet reasonable man, is at once his duty and support.

ELIPHAZ.

The ways of God are unfearchable. And yet, my friend, I think it is not merely to prove you, that he hath deprived you of wealth, of the light of Heaven, and shed bitterness over your days, by taking your son, your last and only comfort, from you. No, no; he means to offer the world an example of virtue the most perfect, the most pure.

T O B I T.

I merit not praise. During my whole
life

life the inclinations of my heart only have I followed ; to necessity have submitted. But speak we of thy affairs, Eliphaz. Hast thou brought home thy children ?

ELIPHAZ.

All, all are with me, now, and I am returned to conclude the marriage of my son.

TOBIT.

The marriage of your son !—You are a happy father.

ELIPHAZ.

Tobit, shouldest thou think me fully happy, how much wouldest thou wrong my friendship !

TOBIT.

I know thy heart ; and, if an involuntary sigh breaks forth from mine, doubt not that I participate thy present joys, thy approaching happiness, most sincerely.—I hear footsteps.

ELIPHAZ.

Anna is coming hither.

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

ELIPHAZ, TOBIT, ANNA.

ANNA, (*Eagerly.*)

I have this moment learned, Eliphaz, that you were here. Wherefore have you not asked for me? Why speak in private to my husband? Have you heard any news of my son?

ELIPHAZ.

Alas! would I had; but I am not so fortunate.

ANNA.

And why this sudden change of tone? Just now you were both in earnest conversation, both affected. At present you are speechless, confused.—What was the subject of your discourse?—I am determined to know.—Answer me, Tobit, has he told you any thing concerning my son?

TOBIT.

No.

ANNA.

ANNA.

Think not to deceive me; by your manner I perceive there is some mystery, some new subject of sorrow, with which I am not to be acquainted.—I conjure thee, Tobit, in the name of Heaven I conjure thee, hide nothing from me.—Tell me what this misfortune is.

TOBIT.

I tell thee the truth, Eliphaz has heard no news of our son. He spoke to me of his own, who is soon to be married.

ANNA.

Married! Spoke to you of the marriage of his son!—And at a moment like this!—Came he to invite us to the nuptials?—With feelings like ours, does he think such a sight can soften our griefs, or that we shall be happy guests at such a feast?
(*She turns away to hide her tears.*)

TOBIT.

He, like me, thinks the happiness of a friend the best of consolations.

ANNA.

Consolation!—The earth contains it not. Mention not the word, it is detestable,

ble, and I shall hate all those who know my heart so ill as to offer me consolation.—Eliphaz.—Forgive.—Grief consumes, torments me.—I wish to speak in private with Tobit.

TOBIT, (*Aside to Eliphaz.*)

Excuse, pity her weakness, my friend.

ELIPHAZ, (*Aside to Tobit.*)

I go with regret. Farewel, dear Tobit ; this evening I will return.

S C E N E VII.

ANNA, TOBIT.

ANNA.

Heaven be praised ! he is gone.—Never could I endure that man whose society you continually seek.—Unfeeling, hard hearted, rude.—To come to the house of mourning and lamentation, thus to display his felicity ! There to vaunt of bliss we can never know ! Me to invite to nuptials !—Me, wretched as I am !—Thus cruelly to insult my despair ! 'Tis too much !

TOBIT.

Anna !

ANNA.

ANNA.

Attempt not to excuse him: fruitless will be your endeavors and your eloquence.—It is an unheard of, a monstrous, procedure; and while I breathe shall be remembered.—In short, I desire never to see his face again.—(*Tobit seats himself on a grass bank, and Anna continues her discourse.*) I have no doubt but he intends to return presently with his son and daughter-in-law, merely to brave me, to aggravate my affliction, for he ever had an aversion to me. Nay, we have a fixed antipathy to each other; you know we have, have long known it, and yet you encourage him to come here. I never knew you attached to any person but him. Choose, however, between us: if ever he is seen in this house again, I will instantly quit it never more to return.—Think not to dissuade me; I am determined: all your reasons are superfluous, I will not listen to them.

TOBIT.

I have not said a word.

ANNA.

I know you have not; you never do, you never will speak to me: cruel indifference, disdainful silence is all I expect. There is no possibility of living with you.
—My

—My present sorrows, my tears, my complaints, my excess of wretchedness, you, unfeeling, behold them all.

T O B I T.

You wrong me, Anna, I feel most intimately.

A N N A.

Yes, yes ; 'tis very well :—I understand your irony.

T O B I T.

Alas ! I am but too serious.

A N N A.

It is not in nature to support your provocations !—Instead of pitying, you seek only to irritate ; yet every pang I feel was first inflicted by you ; they are arrows shot from your hands. You first deprived me of my son.—If I must be separated from him, you ought, at least, to have confided him to a prudent and experienced guide. But to deliver him up to a stranger, a boy !—

T O B I T.

I know not, I own, the age of Azarias ; but his wisdom I know.

A N N A.

ANNA.

Wisdom!—I tell you he is a boy, a child, fifteen at the utmost.

TOBIT.

And, if he be, he is then a something supernatural.—Wisdom, profound, clear and consistent, is in all his discourse.—You, yourself, while you listened, beheld and spoke of him with admiration.

ANNA.

Alas! I know not what I did. His discourse I have forgotten; but his youth and inexperience I remember, and the remembrance destroys my peace, preys upon and devours my heart.—Never did I feel torments like those of to-day. Yes, this day, I am certain, some unheard of mischief hangs over me.—What a night have I passed! Sleep interrupted, troubled dreams, and horrid forebodings.—Thrice did I hear a plaintive cry; thrice the lamp went out; and, when day at length, unwillingly, appeared, the black Heavens were overhung with clouds.—Oh! my son, my son!—'Tis past.—No, never shall I see thee more! (*A tumult is heard in the house; Tobit rises.*)

TOBIT.

TOBIT.

What confused clamors are these?

ANNA.

I hear the voice of Eliphaz.—Did not I predict his insulting return?

TOBIT.

'Tis the sound of unexpected joy!—Hearken, Anna! Heardest thou not the name of Tobias?

ANNA.

What sayest thou?—Tobias!—My son!
(*Running precipitately towards the house.*)

SCENE VII.

ANNA, TOBIT, ELIPHAZ, SOPHAR.

(*Followed by a crowd of Neighbours, who enter tumultuously and exclaim,*)

OMNES.

He is come! He is come!

ANNA.

My son!

TOBIT.

TOBIT.

God of manifold mercies !

ELIPHAZ, (*To Tobit.*)

He is come, my friend ! I have seen him, have spoken to him !

TOBIT.

Just heaven !

ANNA,

(*Embracing Tobit.*)

Oh ! my husband !—Dear Eliphaz !—
But where is he ?

ELIPHAZ.

He feared least his sudden appearance should affect his dear parents too much, and sent me, first, to prepare you for his coming ; but the imprudent joy of our good neighbours has prevented me.

ANNA.

Where is he ?

ELIPHAZ.

At home with me.

ANNA:

ANNA.

Ah ! lead, bring me to him. (*Taking bold of the arm of Eliphaz, and dragging him along.*)

SOPHAR,

(*To the neighbours.*)

Follow, follow !

S C E N E IX.

TOBIT, (*Calling.*)

Stop—Anna ! Sophar ! Sophar ! Come hither and guide me.—No one answers.—All are gone, and I, dark in the midst of day, cannot follow them—Yet must I endeavor. Paternal affection, perhaps, may guide me safe. Surely the road that shall lead me to the arms of my son will not be difficult for me to find.—Alas !—Vain are my efforts !—Already, in this space, so small, so bounded, in this garden, which, formerly, in a few moments I could wholly traverse, already am I bewildered.—How wretchedly dependent is he who is deprived of sight !—My son is returned, and here I remain, unable to go meet him.—He will come to me, but I shall behold him no more.—Never ! never !—What said I ! What sinful murmur hath escaped my lips ! And now, at
the

the happy moment when my son is given back to me?—Pardon me, oh God! Thou knowest my heart, beholdest my gratitude, my submission.—Hark, they return.—'Tis my son!—I know the dear voice.—Tobias.

SCENE X, And Last.

TOBIT, TOBIAS, ANNA, AZARIAS,
ELIPHAZ, SOPHAR.

ANNA.

Here he is! Here he is!

TOBIAS,

(Running into his father's arms.)

My father!—Once more receive the most affectionate of sons, the most fortunate of men.

TOBIT.

Oh! my dear Tobias!

TOBIAS,

(Opening a box.)

Ah! my father, you know not yet the whole of my felicity. *(He takes the liver of a fish from the box, and rubs the eyes of his*

his father.) Dissipate, oh God! his darkness: rend the black veil that hides the light of heaven from his eyes, for never was mortal more worthy to admire thee in thy works!

T O B I T.

Is it illusion!——What new, unheard!——God of my father! May it be! Do I again behold my son!

A N N A.

Just Heaven!

E L I P H A Z.

Oh, my friend!

T O B I T.

My heart cannot contain this excess of bliss.——My son!——Anna!——Eliphaz!——I see, I know ye all!

T O B I A S.

'Tis to the virtuous Azarias, my father, that I am indebted for all my happiness.

T O B I T.

Ah! what rewards have we to bestow!

A N N A.

Thou knowest not, dear Tobit, yet, how

how fully we are indebted to this tutelary angel. Our son is married: his wife is young, rich, handsome and virtuous.—Eager again to visit the house of his father, Tobias hath left her, and her retinue, at some distance hence, but we soon shall see her.—Yes, Tobit, thou shalt see her!—I am restored to life, and our son shall leave us no more!

TOBIT.

Receive, oh God! my thanks, my praises. But what thanks or praises can equal all thy benefactions!—Dear Azarias, thou shalt live with us, shall partake of my son's wealth and happiness.

TOBIAS.

'Tis the first wish of my heart!

AZARIAS, *that is to say*, RAPHAEL.

Tobit, the poor, the afflicted, the unfortunate have ever found thee a friend. Thou hast brought up thy son in the fear of the Lord. By thy example, and by the wisdom of thy precepts, thou hast rendered all thy noble virtues hereditary. Adversity hath neither rendered thee enfeebled nor morose. This day doth the Lord reward the filial piety of thy son, and thy own benevolence, resignation,
and

and paternal tenderness. Henceforth shall thy happiness be pure and unmixed. Thy days shall be prolonged beyond the days of man. Nor shall this thy new existence be subject to the common inquietudes of mortality ; but, continually happy here, shall be the harbingers of greater happiness hereafter.——Tobit, farewell ; no more shalt thou behold Azarias, but Raphael shall unceasingly watch over and preserve thee from evil. (*The Angel rises, environed with glory, among the clouds, and the spectators remain astonished.*)

TOBIT, (*Falling on his knees.*)

My son ! Adore we the God of Israel !



F I N I S.

